





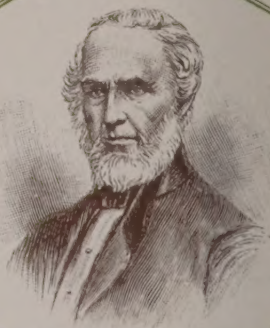
The World's Classics

CLXXXVIII

SELECTED POEMS

OF

WHITTIER



HUMPHREY MILFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

SELECTED POEMS

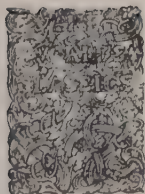
BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER



LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO AND MELBOURNE

SELECTED POEMS
OF
JOHN GREENLEAF
WHITTIER



HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON, EDINBURGH, GLASGOW
NEW YORK, TORONTO, MELBOURNE & BOMBAY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Born, Haverhill, Massachusetts . . . Dec. 17, 1807
Died, Hampton Falls, New Hampshire Sept. 7, 1892

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POEMS

BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

PROEM

[Written to introduce the first general collection of Whittier's Poems.]

I LOVE the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
The songs of Spenser's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad still lips the blessing of the sky.

The rigour of a frozen clime, 11
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labour's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are
here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes. 20

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own. 30

O Freedom ! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine !

AMESBURY, 11th mo , 1847.

NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

CASSANDRA SOUTHWICK

In 1658 two young persons, son and daughter of Lawrence Southwick of Salem, who had himself been imprisoned and deprived of nearly all his property for having entertained Quakers at his house, were fined for non-attendance at church. They being unable to pay the fine, the General Court issued an order empowering "the Treasurer of the County to sell the said persons to any of the English nation of *Virginia* or *Barbadoes*, to answer said fines." An attempt was made to carry this order into execution, but no shipmaster was found willing to convey them to the West Indies.

To the God of all sure mercies let my blessing rise
to-day,
From the scoffer and the cruel He hath plucked the
spoil away;
Yea, He who cooled the furnace around the faithful
three,
And tamed the Chaldean lions, hath set His handmaid
free !

Last night I saw the sunset melt through my prison
bars,
Last night across my damp earth-floor fell the pale
gleam of stars;
In the coldness and the darkness all through the long
night-time,
My grated casement whitened with autumn's early
rime.

4 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

Alone, in that dark sorrow, hour after hour crept by;
Star after star looked palely in and sank adown the
sky; 10

No sound amid night's stillness, save that which seemed
to be

The dull and heavy beating of the pulses of the sea;

All night I sat unsleeping, for I knew that on the
morrow

The ruler and the cruel priest would mock me in my
sorrow,

Dragged to their place of market, and bargained for
and sold,

Like a lamb before the shambles, like a heifer from the
fold!

Oh, the weakness of the flesh was there,—the shrinking
and the shame;

And the low voice of the Tempter like whispers to me
came:

“Why sit'st thou thus forlornly,” the wicked murmur
said,

“Damp walls thy bower of beauty, cold earth thy
maiden bed?” 20

“Where be the smiling faces, and voices soft and sweet,
Seen in thy father's dwelling, heard in the pleasant
street?”

Where be the youths whose glances, the summer
Sabbath through,

Turned tenderly and timidly unto thy father's pew?

“Why sit'st thou here, Cassandra?—Bethink thee
with what mirth

Thy happy schoolmates gather around the warm,
bright hearth;

How the crimson shadows tremble on foreheads white
and fair,

On eyes of merry girlhood, half hid in golden hair.

“ Not for thee the hearth-fire brightens, not for thee
kind words are spoken,
Not for thee the nuts of Wenham woods by laughing
boys are broken ; 30
No first-fruits of the orchard within thy lap are laid,
For thee no flowers of autumn the youthful hunters
braid.

“ O weak, deluded maiden !—by crazy fancies led,
With wild and raving railers an evil path to tread ;
To leave a wholesome worship, and teaching pure and
sound,
And mate with maniac women, loose-haired and sack-
cloth bound,—

“ Mad scoffers of the priesthood, who mock at things
divine,
Who rail against the pulpit, and holy bread and
wine ;
•Sore from their cart-tail scourgings, and from the
pillory lame,
Rejoicing in their wretchedness, and glorying in their
shame. 40

“ And what a fate awaits thee !—a sadly toiling slave,
Dragging the slowly lengthening chain of bondage to
the grave !
Think of thy woman's nature, subdued in hopeless
thrall,
The easy prey of any, the scoff and scorn of all !”

Oh, ever as the Tempter spoke, and feeble Nature's
fears
Wrung drop by drop the scalding flow of unavailing
tears,
I wrestled down the evil thoughts, and strove in silent
prayer,
To feel, O Helper of the weak ! that Thou indeed wert
there !

6 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

I thought of Paul and Silas, within Philippi's cell,
And how from Peter's sleeping limbs the prison-shackles
fell, 50
Till I seemed to hear the trailing of an angel's robe of
white,
And to feel a blessed presence invisible to sight.

Bless the Lord for all His mercies !—for the peace and
love I felt,
Like dew of Hermon's holy hill, upon my spirit melt;
When "Get behind me, Satan !" was the language of
my heart,
And I felt the Evil Tempter with all his doubts depart.

Slow broke the grey cold morning; again the sunshine
fell,
Flecked with the shade of bar and grate within my
lonely cell;
The hoar-frost melted on the wall, and upward from
the street
Came careless laugh and idle word, and tread of
passing feet. 60

At length the heavy bolts fell back, my door was open
cast,
And slowly at the sheriff's side, up the long street I
passed;
I heard the murmur round me, and felt, but dared
not see,
How, from every door and window, the people gazed
on me.

And doubt and fear fell on me, shame burned upon
my cheek,
Swam earth and sky around me, my trembling limbs
grew weak:
"O Lord! support Thy handmaid; and from her soul
cast out
The fear of man, which brings a snare, the weakness
and the doubt."

Then the dreary shadows scattered, like a cloud in-
morning's breeze,
And a low deep voice within me seemed whispering
words like these: 70
"Though thy earth be as the iron, and thy heaven a
brazen wall,
Trust still His loving-kindness whose power is over all."

We paused at length, where at my feet the sunlit
waters broke
On glaring reach of shining beach, and shingly wall of
rock;
The merchant-ships lay idly there, in hard clear lines
on high,
Tracing with rope and slender spar their network on
the sky.

And there were ancient citizens, cloak-wrapped and
grave and cold,
And grim and stout sea-captains with faces bronzed
and old,
And on his horse, with Rawson, his cruel clerk at hand,
Sat dark and haughty Endicott, the ruler of the land.

And poisoning with his evil words the ruler's ready
ear, 81
The priest leaned o'er his saddle, with laugh and scoff
and jeer;
It stirred my soul, and from my lips the seal of silence
broke,
As if through woman's weakness a warning spirit spoke.

I cried, "The Lord rebuke thee, thou smiter of the
meek,
Thou robber of the righteous, thou trampler of the
weak!
Go light the dark, cold hearth-stones,—go turn the
prison lock
Of the poor hearts thou hast hunted, thou wolf amid
the flock!"

8 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

Dark lowered the brows of Endicott, and with a deeper
red

O'er Rawson's wine-empurpled cheek the flush of
anger spread;

"Good people," quoth the white-lipped priest, "heed
not her words so wild,"

Her Master speaks within her,—the Devil owns his
child!"

But grey heads shook, and young brows knit, the while
the sheriff read

That law the wicked rulers against the poor have made,
Who to their house of Rimmon and idol priesthood
bring

No bended knee of worship, nor gainful offering.

Then to the stout sea-captains the sheriff, turning,
said,—

"Which of ye, worthy seamen, will take this Quaker
maid?

In the Isle of fair Barbadoes, or on Virginia's shore,
You may hold her at a higher price than Indian girl
or Moor."

100

Grim and silent stood the captains; and when again
he cried,

"Speak out, my worthy seamen!"—no voice, no sign
replied;

But I felt a hard hand press my own, and kind words
met my ear,—

"God bless thee, and preserve thee, my gentle girl and
dear!"

A weight seemed lifted from my heart, a pitying friend
was nigh,—

I felt it in his hard, rough hand, and saw it in his eye;
And when again the sheriff spoke, that voice, so kind
to me,

Growled back its stormy answer like the roaring of the
sea,—

“ Pile my ship with bars of silver, pack with coins of
Spanish gold,
From keel-piece up to deck-plank, the roomage of her
hold, 110
By the living God who made me !—I would sooner in
your bay
Sink ship and crew and cargo, than bear this child
away !”

“ Well answered, worthy captain, shame on their cruel
laws !”
Ran through the crowd in murmurs loud the people’s
just applause.
“ Like the herdsman of Tekoa, in Israel of old,
Shall we see the poor and righteous again for silver
sold ?”

I looked on haughty Endicott; with weapon half-way
drawn,
Swept round the throng his lion glare of bitter hate
and scorn;
Fiercely he drew his bridle-rein, and turned in silence
back,
And sneering priest and baffled clerk rode murmuring
in his track. 120

Hard after them the sheriff looked, in bitterness of soul;
Thrice smote his staff upon the ground, and crushed
his parchment roll.
“ Good friends,” he said, “ since both have fled, the
ruler and the priest,
Judge ye, if from their further work I be not well
released.”

Loud was the cheer which, full and clear, swept round
the silent bay,
As, with kind words and kinder looks, he bade me go
my way;
For He who turns the courses of the streamlet of the
glen,
And the river of great waters, had turned the hearts
of men.

10 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

Oh, at that hour the very earth seemed changed be-
neath my eye,
A holier wonder round me rose the blue walls of the
sky, 130
A lovelier light on rock and hill and stream and wood-
land lay,
And softer lapsed on sunnier sands the waters of the
bay.

Thanksgiving to the Lord of life ! to Him all praises be,
Who from the hands of evil men hath set His handmaid
free;
All praise to Him before whose power the mighty are
afraid,
Who takes the crafty in the snare which for the poor
is laid !

Sing, O my soul, rejoicingly, on evening's twilight calm
Uplift the loud thanksgiving, pour forth the grateful
psalm;
Let all dear hearts with me rejoice, as did the saints
of old,
When of the Lord's good angel the rescued Peter told.

And weep and howl, ye evil priests and mighty men of
wrong, 141
The Lord shall smite the proud, and lay His hand upon
the strong.
Woe to the wicked rulers in His avenging hour !
Woe to the wolves who seek the flocks to raven and
devour !

But let the humble ones arise, the poor in heart be
glad,
And let the mourning ones again with robes of praise
be clad.
For He who cooled the furnace, and smoothed the
stormy wave,
And tamed the Chaldean lions, is mighty still to save !

THE NEW WIFE AND THE OLD

The following ballad is founded upon one of the marvellous legends connected with the famous General M——, of Hampton, New Hampshire, who was regarded by his neighbours as a Yankee Faust, in league with the adversary. I give the story, as I heard it when a child, from a venerable family visitant.

DARK the halls, and cold the feast,
Gone the bridemaids, gone the priest.
All is over, all is done,
Twain of yesterday are one !
Blooming girl and manhood grey,
Autumn in the arms of May !

Hushed within and hushed without,
Dancing feet and wrestlers' shout ;
Dies the bonfire on the hill ;
All is dark and all is still, 10
Save the starlight, save the breeze
Moaning through the graveyard trees ;
And the great sea-waves below,
Pulse of the midnight beating slow.

From the brief dream of a bride
She hath wakened, at his side.
With half-uttered shriek and start,—
Feels she not his beating heart ?
And the pressure of his arm,
And his breathing near and warm ? 20

Lightly from the bridal bed
Springs that fair dishevelled head,
And a feeling, new, intense,
Half of shame, half innocence,
Maiden fear and wonder speaks
Through her lips and changing cheeks.

From the oaken mantel glowing,
 Faintest light the lamp is throwing
 On the mirror's antique mould,
 High-backed chair, and wainscot old, 30
 And, through faded curtains stealing,
 His dark sleeping face revealing.

Listless lies the strong man there,
 Silver-streaked his careless hair;
 Lips of love have left no trace
 On that hard and haughty face;
 And that forehead's knitted thought
 Love's soft hand hath not unwrought.

"Yet," she sighs, "he loves me well,
 More than these calm lips will tell. 40
 Stooping to my lowly state,
 He hath made me rich and great.
 And I bless him, though he be
 Hard and stern to all save me!"

While she speaketh, falls the light
 O'er her fingers small and white;
 Gold and gem, and costly ring
 Back the timid lustre fling.—
 Love's selectest gifts, and rare,
 His proud hand had fastened there. 50

Gratefully she marks the glow
 From those tapering lines of snow;
 Fondly o'er the sleeper bending,
 His black hair with golden blending,
 In her soft and light caress,
 Cheek and lip together press.

Ha!—that start of horror! why
 That wild stare and wilder cry,
 Full of terror, full of pain?
 Is there madness in her brain? 60
 Hark! that gasping, hoarse and low,
 "Spare me,—spare me,—let me go!"

God have mercy !—icy cold
Spectral hands her own enfold,
Drawing silently from them
Love's fair gifts of gold and gem.
“Waken ! save me !” still as death
At her side he slumbereth.

Ring and bracelet all are gone,
And that ice-cold hand withdrawn; 70
But she hears a murmur low,
Full of sweetness, full of woe,
Half a sigh and half a moan :
“Fear not ! give the dead her own !”

Ah !—the dead wife's voice she knows !
That cold hand whose pressure froze,
Once in warmest life had borne
Gem and band her own hath worn.
“Wake thee ! wake thee !” Lo, his eyes 80
Open with a dull surprise.

In his arms the strong man folds her,
Closer to his breast he holds her;
Trembling limbs his own are meeting,
And he feels her heart's quick beating:
“Nay, my dearest, why this fear ?”
“Hush !” she saith, “the dead is here !”

“Nay, a dream,—an idle dream.”
But before the lamp's pale gleam
Tremblingly her hand she raises.
There no more the diamond blazes, 90
Clasp of pearl, or ring of gold,—
“Ah !” she sighs, “her hand was cold !”

Broken words of cheer he saith,
But his dark lip quivereth,
And as o'er the past he thinketh,
From his young wife's arms he shrinketh;
Can those soft arms round him lie,
Underneath his dead wife's eye ?

14 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

She her fair young head can rest
Soothed and childlike on his breast, 100
And in trustful innocence
Draw new strength and courage thence;
He, the proud man, feels within
But the cowardice of sin !

She can murmur in her thought
Simple prayers her mother taught,
And His blessed angels call,
Whose great love is over all ;
He, alone, in prayerless pride.
Meets the dark Past at her side ! 110

One, who living shrank with dread
From his look, or word, or tread,
Unto whom her early grave
Was as freedom to the slave,
Moves him at this midnight hour,
With the dead's unconscious power !

Ah, the dead, the unforgot !
From their solemn homes of thought,
Where the cypress shadows blend
Darkly over foe and friend, 120
Or in love or sad rebuke,
Back upon the living look.

And the tenderest ones and weakest,
Who their wrongs have borne the meekest,
Lifting from those dark, still places,
Sweet and sad-remembered faces,
O'er the guilty hearts behind
An unwitting triumph find.

BARCLAY OF URY

Among the earliest converts to the doctrines of Friends in Scotland was Barclay of Ury, an old and distinguished soldier, who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus, in Germany. As a Quaker, he became the object of persecution and abuse at the hands of the magistrates and the populace. None bore the indignities of the mob with greater patience and nobleness of soul than this once proud gentleman and soldier. One of his friends, on an occasion of uncommon rudeness, lamented that he should be treated so harshly in his old age who had been so honoured before. "I find more satisfaction," said Barclay, "as well as honour, in being thus insulted for my religious principles, than when, a few years ago, it was usual for the magistrates, as I passed the city of Aberdeen, to meet me on the road and conduct me to public entertainment in their hall, and then escort me out again, to gain my favour."

Up the streets of Aberdeen,
By the kirk and college green,
Rode the Laird of Ury;
Close behind him, close beside,
Foul of mouth and evil-eyed,
Pressed the mob in fury.

Flouted him the drunken churl,
Jeered at him the serving-girl,
Prompt to please her master;
And the begging carlin, late
Fed and clothed at Ury's gate,
Cursed him as he passed her.

10

Yet, with calm and stately mien,
Up the streets of Aberdeen
Came he slowly riding;
And, to all he saw and heard,
Answering not with bitter word,
Turning not for chiding.

Came a troop with broadswords swinging,
Bits and bridles sharply ringing,
Loose and free and froward;
Quoth the foremost, "Ride him down!
Push him! prick him! through the town
Drive the Quaker coward!"

20

But from out the thickening crowd
Cried a sudden voice and loud :

“ Barclay ! Ho ! a Barclay ! ”
And the old man at his side
Saw a comrade, battle-tried,
Scarred and sunburned darkly ; 30

Who with ready weapon bare,
Fronting to the troopers there,
Cried aloud : “ God save us,
Call ye coward him who stood
Ankle-deep in Lützen’s blood,
With the brave Gustavus ? ”

“ Nay, I do not need thy sword,
Comrade mine,” said Ury’s lord ;
“ Put it up, I pray thee :
Passive to His holy will, 40
Trust I in my Master still,
Even though He slay me.

“ Pledges of thy love and faith,
Proved on many a field of death,
Not by me are needed.”
Marvelled much that henchman bold,
That his laird, so stout of old,
Now so meekly pleaded.

“ Woe’s the day ! ” he sadly said,
With a slowly shaking head, 50
And a look of pity ;
“ Ury’s honest lord reviled,
Mock of knave and sport of child,
In his own good city !

“ Speak the word, and, master mine,
As we charged on Tilly’s line,
And his Walloon lancers,
Smiting through their midst we’ll teach
Civil look and decent speech
To these boyish prancers ! ” 60

“ Marvel not, mine ancient friend,
Like beginning, like the end,”

Quoth the Laird of Ury;

“ Is the sinful servant more
Than his gracious Lord who bore
Bonds and stripes in Jewry ?

“ Give me joy that in His name
I can bear, with patient frame,

All these vain ones offer;

While for them He suffereth long,
Shall I answer wrong with wrong,
Scoffing with the scoffer ?

70

“ Happier I, with loss of all,
Hunted, outlawed, held in thrall,
With few friends to greet me,
Than when reeve and squire were seen,
Riding out from Aberdeen,
With bared heads to meet me.

“ When each goodwife, o’er and o’er,
Blessed me as I passed her door;
And the snooded daughter,
Through her casement glancing down,
Smiled on him who bore renown
From red fields of slaughter.

80

“ Hard to feel the stranger’s scoff,
Hard the old friend’s falling off,
Hard to learn forgiving;
But the Lord His own rewards,
And His love with theirs accords,
Warm and fresh and living.

90

“ Through this dark and stormy night
Faith beholds a feeble light
Up the blackness streaking;
Knowing God’s own time is best,
In a patient hope I rest
For the full day-breaking !”

18 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

So the Laird of Ury said,
Turning slow his horse's head.
Towards the Tolbooth prison,
Where, through iron gates, he heard 100
Poor disciples of the Word
Preach of Christ arisen !

Not in vain, Confessor old,
Unto us the tale is told
Of thy day of trial;
Every age on him who strays
From its broad and beaten ways
Pours its sevenfold vial.

Happy he whose inward ear
Angel comfortings can hear, 110
O'er the rabble's laughter;
And while Hatred's fagots burn,
Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter.

Knowing this, that never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set
In the world's wide fallow;
After hands shall sow the seed,
After hands from hill and mead
Reap the harvests yellow. 120

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,
Must the moral pioneer
From the Future borrow;
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,
And, on midnight's sky of rain,
Paint the golden morrow !

THE CHAPEL OF THE HERMITS

The incident upon which this poem is based is related in a note to Bernardin Henri Saint Pierre's *Etudes de la Nature*.

"We arrived at the habitation of the Hermits a little before they sat down to their table, and while they were still at church. J. J. Rousseau proposed to me to offer up our devotions. The hermits were reciting the Litanies of Providence, which are remarkably beautiful. After we had addressed our prayers to God, and the hermits were proceeding to the refectory, Rousseau said to me, with his heart overflowing, 'At this moment I experience what is said in the gospel: *Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.* There is here a feeling of peace and happiness which penetrates the soul.' I said, 'If Fénelon had lived, you would have been a Catholic.' He exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, 'Oh, if Fénelon were alive, I would struggle to get into his service, even as a lackey!'"

"I do believe, and yet, in grief,
I pray for help to unbelief;
For needful strength aside to lay
The daily cumberings of my way.

"I'm sick at heart of craft and cant,
Sick of the crazed enthusiast's rant,
Profession's smooth hypocrisies,
And creeds of iron, and lives of ease.

"I ponder o'er the sacred word,
I read the record of our Lord; 10
And, weak and troubled, envy them
Who touched His seamless garment's hem;

"Who saw the tears of love He wept
Above the grave where Lazarus slept;
And heard, amidst the shadows dim
Of Olivet, His evening hymn.

"How blessed the swineherd's low estate,
The beggar crouching at the gate,
The leper loathly and abhorred,
Whose eyes of flesh beheld the Lord! 20

“ O sacred soil His sandals pressed !
 Sweet fountains of His noonday rest !
 O light and air of Palestine,
 Impregnate with His life divine !

“ Oh, bear me thither ! Let me look
 On Siloa's pool, and Kedron's brook ;
 Kneel at Gethsemane, and by
 Gennesaret walk, before I die !

“ Methinks this cold and northern night
 Would melt before that Orient light ;
 And, wet by Hermon's dew and rain,
 My childhood's faith revive again !”

30

So spake my friend, one autumn day,
 Where the still river slid away
 Beneath us, and above the brown
 Red curtains of the woods shut down.

Then said I,—for I could not brook
 The mute appealing of his look,—

“ I too am weak, and faith is small,
 And blindness happeneth unto all.

40

“ Yet sometimes glimpses on my sight,
 Through present wrong, the eternal right ;
 And, step by step, since time began,
 I see the steady gain of man ;

“ That all of good the past hath had
 Remains to make our own time glad,
 Our common daily life divine,
 And every land a Palestine.

“ Thou weariest of thy present state ;
 What gain to thee time's holiest date ?
 The doubter now perchance had been
 As High Priest or as Pilate then !

50

“What thought Chorazin’s scribes ? What faith
In Him had Nain and Nazareth ?
Of the few followers whom He led
One sold Him,—all forsook and fled.

“O friend ! we need nor rock nor sand,
Nor storied stream of Morning-Land ;
The heavens are glassed in Merrimac,—
What more could Jordan render back ? 60

“We lack but open eye and ear
To find the Orient’s marvels here ;
The still small voice in autumn’s hush,
Yon maple wood the burning bush.

“For still the new transcends the old,
In signs and tokens manifold ;
Slaves rise up men ; the olive waves,
With roots deep set in battle graves !

“Through the harsh noises of our day
A low, sweet prelude finds its way ; 70
Through clouds of doubt, and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking, calm and clear.

“That song of Love, now low and far,
Erelong shall swell from star to star !
That light, the breaking day, which tips
The golden-spired Apocalypse !”

Then, when my good friend shook his head
And, sighing, sadly smiled, I said :
“Thou mind’st me of a story told
In rare Bernardin’s leaves of gold.” 80

And while the slanted sunbeams wove
The shadows of the frost-stained grove
And, picturing all, the river ran
O’er cloud and wood, I thus began :—

22 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

In Mount Valerien's chestnut wood
The Chapel of the Hermits stood;
And thither, at the close of day,
Came two old pilgrims, worn and grey.

One, whose impetuous youth defied
The storms of Baikal's wintry side, 90
And mused and dreamed where tropic day
Flamed o'er his lost Virginia's bay.

His simple tale of love and woe
All hearts had melted, high or low;—
A blissful pain, a sweet distress,
Immortal in its tenderness.

Yet, while above his charméd page
Beat quick the young heart of his age,
He walked amidst the crowd unknown,
A sorrowing old man, strange and lone. 100

A homeless, troubled age,—the grey
Pale setting of a weary day;
Too dull his ear for voice of praise,
Too sadly worn his brow for bays.

Pride, lust of power and glory, slept;
Yet still his heart its young dream kept,
And, wandering like the deluge-dove,
Still sought the resting-place of love.

And, mateless, childless, envied more
The peasant's welcome from his door 110
By smiling eyes at eventide,
Than kingly gifts or lettered pride.

Until, in place of wife and child,
All-pitying Nature on him smiled,
And gave to him the golden keys
To all her inmost sanctities.

Mild Druid of her wood-paths dim !
She laid her great heart bare to him,
Its loves and sweet accords ;—he saw
The beauty of her perfect law.

120

The language of her signs he knew,
What notes her cloudy clarion blew ;
The rhythm of autumn's forest dyes,
The hymn of sunset's painted skies.

And thus he seemed to hear the song
Which swept, of old, the stars along ;
And to his eyes the earth once more
Its fresh and primal beauty wore.

Who sought with him, from summer air,
And field and wood, a balm for care ;
And bathed in light of sunset skies
His tortured nerves and weary eyes ?

130

His fame on all the winds had flown ;
His words had shaken crypt and throne ;
Like fire, on camp and court and cell
They dropped, and kindled as they fell.

Beneath the pomps of state, below
The mitred juggler's masque and show,
A prophecy, a vague hope, ran
His burning thought from man to man.

140

For peace or rest too well he saw
The fraud of priests, the wrong of law,
And felt how hard, between the two,
Their breath of pain the millions drew.

A prophet-utterance, strong and wild,
The weakness of an unweaned child,
A sun-bright hope for human-kind,
And self-despair, in him combined.

24 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

He loathed the false, yet lived not true
To half the glorious truths he knew : 150
The doubt, the discord, and the sin.
He mourned without, he felt within.

Untrod by him the path he showed,
Sweet pictures on his easel glowed
Of simple faith, and loves of home,
And virtue's golden days to come.

But weakness, shame, and folly made
The foil to all his pen portrayed ;
Still, where his dreamy splendours shone,
The shadow of himself was thrown. 160

Lord, what is man, whose thought, at times,
Up to Thy sevenfold brightness climbs,
While still his grosser instinct clings
To earth, like other creeping things !

So rich in words, in acts so mean ;
So high, so low ; chance-swung between
The foulness of the penal pit
And Truth's clear sky, millennium-lit !

Vain, pride of star-lent genius !—vain,
Quick fancy and creative brain, 170
Unblest by prayerful sacrifice,
Absurdly great, or weakly wise !

Midst yearnings for a truer life,
Without were fears, within was strife ;
And still his wayward act denied
The perfect good for which he sighed.

The love he sent forth void returned :
The fame that crowned him scorched and
burned,
Burning, yet cold and drear and lone. —
A fire-mount in a frozen zone ! 180

Like that the grey-haired sea-king passed,
Seen southward from his sleety mast,
About whose brows of changeless frost
A wreath of flame the wild winds tossed.

Far round the mournful beauty played
Of lambent light and purple shade,
Lost on the fixed and dumb despair
Of frozen earth and sea and air !

A man apart, unknown, unloved
By those whose wrongs his soul had moved,
He bore the ban of Church and State, 191
The good man's fear, the bigot's hate !

Forth from the city's noise and throng,
Its pomp and shame, its sin and wrong,
The twain that summer day had strayed
To Mount Valerien's chestnut shade.

To them the green fields and the wood
Lent something of their quietude,
And golden-tinted sunset seemed
Prophetical of all they dreamed. 200

The hermits from their simple cares
The bell was calling home to prayers,
And, listening to its sound, the twain
Seemed lapped in childhood's trust again.

Wide open stood the chapel door ;
A sweet old music, swelling o'er
Low prayerful murmurs, issued thence,—
The Litanies of Providence !

Then Rousseau spake : " Where two or three
In His name meet, He there will be !" 210
And then, in silence, on their knees
They sank beneath the chestnut trees.

As to the blind returning light,
 As daybreak to the Arctic night,
 Old faith revived; the doubts of years
 Dissolved in reverential tears.

That gush of feeling overpast,
 "Ah me!" Bernardin sighed at last,
 "I would thy bitterest foes could see
 Thy heart as it is seen of me!" 220

"No church of God hast thou denied;
 Thou hast but spurned in scorn aside
 A bare and hollow counterfeit,
 Profaning the pure name of it!"

"With dry dead moss and marish weeds
 His fire the western herdsman feeds,
 And greener from the ashen plain
 The sweet spring grasses rise again.

"Nor thunder-peal nor mighty wind
 Disturb the solid sky behind; 230
 And through the cloud the red bolt rends
 The calm, still smile of Heaven descends!"

"Thus through the world, like bolt and blast,
 And scourging fire, thy words have passed.
 Clouds break,—the steadfast heavens remain;
 Weeds burn,—the ashes feed the grain!"

"But whoso strives with wrong may find
 Its touch pollute, its darkness blind;
 And learn, as latent fraud is shown
 In others' faith, to doubt his own. 240

"With dream and falsehood, simple trust
 And pious hope we tread in dust;
 Lost the calm faith in goodness,—lost
 The baptism of the Pentecost!"

“ Alas !—the blows for error meant
Too oft on truth itself are spent,
As through the false and vile and base
Looks forth her sad, rebuking face.

“ Not ours the Theban’s charmèd life;
We come not scathless from the strife ! 25c
The Python’s coil about us clings,
The trampled Hydra bites and stings !

“ Meanwhile, the sport of seeming chance,
The plastic shapes of circumstance,
What might have been we fondly guess,
If earlier born, or tempted less.

“ And thou, in these wild, troubled days,
Misjudged alike in blame and praise,
Unsought and undeserved the same
The sceptic’s praise, the bigot’s blame;— 260

“ I cannot doubt, if thou hadst been
Among the highly favoured men
Who walked on earth with Fénelon,
He would have owned thee as his son ;

“ And, bright with wings of cherubim
Visibly waving over him,
Seen through his life, the Church had seemed
All that its old confessors dreamed.”

“ I would have been,” Jean Jacques replied,
“ The humblest servant at his side, 270
Obscure, unknown, content to see
How beautiful man’s life may be !

“ Oh, more than thrice-blest relic, more
Than solemn rite or sacred lore,
The holy life of one who trod
The foot-marks of the Christ of God !

" Amidst a blinded world he saw
 The oneness of the Dual law;
 That Heaven's sweet peace on Earth began,
 And God was loved through love of man.

" He lived the Truth which reconciled 281
 The strong man Reason, Faith the child;
 In him belief and act were one,
 The homilies of duty done !"

So speaking, through the twilight grey
 The two old pilgrims went their way.
 What seeds of life that day were sown,
 The heavenly watchers knew alone.

Time passed, and Autumn came to fold
 Green Summer in her brown and gold; 290
 Time passed, and Winter's tears of snow
 Dropped on the grave-mound of Rousseau.

"The tree remaineth where it fell,
 The pained on earth is pained in hell !"
 So priestcraft from its altars cursed
 The mournful doubts its falsehood nursed.

Ah ! well of old the Psalmist prayed,
 " Thy hand, not man's, on me be laid !"
 Earth frowns below, Heaven weeps above,
 And man is hate, but God is love ! 300

No Hermits now the wanderer sees,
 Nor chapel with its chestnut trees;
 A morning dream, a tale that's told,
 The wave of change o'er all has rolled.

Yet lives the lesson of that day;
 And from its twilight cool and grey
 Comes up a low, sad whisper, " Make
 The truth thine own, for truth's own sake.

“ Why wait to see in thy brief span
Its perfect flower and fruit in man ?
No saintly touch can save ; no balm
Of healing hath the martyr's palm.

“Midst soulless forms, and false pretence
Of spiritual pride and pampered sense,
A voice saith, ‘What is that to thee?
Be true thyself, and follow Me!’

“ In days when throne and altar heard
The wanton's wish, the bigot's word,
And pomp of state and ritual show
Scarce hid the loathsome death below,— 320

“Midst fawning priests and courtiers foul,
The losel swarm of crown and cowl,
White-robed walked François Fénelon,
Stainless as Uriel in the sun !

“ Yet in his time the stake blazed red,
The poor were eaten up like bread :
Men knew him not ; his garment’s hem
No healing virtue had for them.

" Alas ! no present saint we find ;
The white cymar gleams far behind. 330
Revealed in outline vague, sublime,
Through telescopic mists of time !

“Trust not in man with passing breath,
But in the Lord, old Scripture saith;
The truth which saves thou mayst not blend
With false professor, faithless friend.

“Search thine own heart. What paineth thee
In others in thyself may be;
All dust is frail, all flesh is weak;
Be thou the true man thou dost seek ! 340

"Where now with pain thou treadest, trod
The whitest of the saints of God !
To show thee where their feet were set,
The light which led them shineth yet.

"The footprints of the life divine,
Which marked their path, remain in thine;
And that great Life, transfused in theirs,
Awaits thy faith, thy love, thy prayers !"

A lesson which I well may heed,
A word of fitness to my need; 350
So from that twilight cool and grey
Still saith a voice, or seems to say.

We rose, and slowly homeward turned,
While down the west the sunset burned;
And, in its light, hill, wood, and tide,
And human forms seemed glorified.

The village homes transfigured stood,
And purple bluffs, whose belting wood
Across the waters leaned to hold
The yellow leaves like lamps of gold. 360

Then spake my friend: "Thy words are true;
For ever old, for ever new,
These home-seen splendours are the same
Which over Eden's sunsets came.

"To these bowed heavens let wood and hill
Lift voiceless praise and anthem still;
Fall, warm with blessing, over them,
Light of the New Jerusalem !

"Flow on, sweet river, like the stream
Of John's Apocalyptic dream ! 370
This mapled ridge shall Horeb be,
Yon green-banked lake our Galilee !

"Henceforth my heart shall sigh no more
For olden time and holier shore;
God's love and blessing, then and there,
Are now and here and everywhere."

1851.

TAULER

TAULER, the preacher, walked, one autumn day,
Without the walls of Strasburg, by the Rhine,
Pondering the solemn Miracle of Life;
As one who, wandering in a starless night,
Feels momentarily the jar of unseen waves,
And hears the thunder of an unknown sea,
Breaking along an unimagined shore.

And as he walked he prayed. Even the same
Old prayer with which, for half a score of years,
Morning, and noon, and evening, lip and heart
Had groaned: "Have pity upon me, Lord! 11
Thou seest, while teaching others, I am blind.
Send me a man who can direct my steps!"

Then, as he mused, he heard along his path
A sound as of an old man's staff among
The dry, dead linden-leaves; and, looking up,
He saw a stranger, weak, and poor, and old.

"Peace be unto thee, father!" Tauler said,
"God give thee a good day!" The old man raised
Slowly his calm blue eyes. "I thank thee, son;
But all my days are good, and none are ill." 21

Wondering thereat, the preacher spake again,
"God give thee happy life." The old man smiled,
"I never am unhappy."

Tauler laid

His hand upon the stranger's coarse grey sleeve:
"Tell me, O father, what thy strange words mean.

Surely man's days are evil, and his life
 Sad as the grave it leads to." "Nay, my son,
 Our times are in God's hands, and all our days
 Are as our needs; for shadow as for sun. 30
 For cold as heat, for want as wealth, alike
 Our thanks are due, since that is best which is;
 And that which is not, sharing not His life,
 Is evil only as devoid of good.
 And for the happiness of which I spake,
 I find it in submission to His will,
 And calm trust in the holy Trinity
 Of Knowledge, Goodness, and Almighty Power."

Silently wondering, for a little space, 39
 Stood the great preacher; then he spake as one
 Who, suddenly grappling with a haunting thought
 Which long has followed, whispering through the
 dark
 Strange terrors, drags it, shrieking, into light:
 "What if God's will consign thee hence to Hell?"

"Then," said the stranger, cheerily, "be it so.
 What Hell may be I know not; this I know,—
 I cannot lose the presence of the Lord.
 One arm, Humility, takes hold upon
 His dear Humanity; the other, Love,
 Clasps his Divinity. So where I go 50
 He goes; and better fire-walled Hell with Him
 Than golden-gated Paradise without."

Tears sprang in Tauler's eyes. A sudden light,
 Like the first ray which fell on chaos, clove
 Apart the shadow wherein he had walked
 Darkly at noon. And, as the strange old man
 Went his slow way, until his silver hair
 Set like the white moon where the hills of vine
 Slope to the Rhine, he bowed his head and said:
 "My prayer is answered. God hath sent the man
 Long sought, to teach me, by his simple trust,
 Wisdom the weary schoolmen never knew." 62

So, entering with a changed and cheerful step
 The city gates, he saw, far down the street,
 A mighty shadow break the light of noon;
 Which tracing backward till its airy lines
 Hardened to stony plinths, he raised his eyes
 O'er broad façade and lofty pediment,
 O'er architrave and frieze and sainted niche,
 Up the stone lace-work chiselled by the wise 70
 Erwin of Steinbach, dizzily up to where
 In the noon-brightness the great Minster's tower,
 Jewelled with sunbeams on its mural crown,
 Rose like a visible prayer. "Behold!" he said,
 "The stranger's faith made plain before mine eyes.
 As yonder tower outstretches to the earth
 The dark triangle of its shade alone
 When the clear day is shining on its top,
 So, darkness in the pathway of Man's life
 Is but the shadow of God's providence, 80
 By the great Sun of Wisdom cast thereon;
 And what is dark below is light in Heaven."

1853.

MAUD MULLER

MAUD MULLER on a summer's day,
 Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
 Of simple beauty and rustic health.

Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
 The mock-bird echoed from his tree.

But when she glanced to the far-off town,
 White from its hill-slope looking down,

The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
 And a nameless longing filled her breast.— 10

A wish that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,

And asked a draught from the spring that flowed
Through the meadow across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled up,
And filled for him her small tin cup. 20

And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.

"Thanks!" said the Judge; "a sweeter draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed."

He spoke of the grass and flowers and trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming bees;

Then talked of the haying, and wondered whether
The cloud in the west would bring foul weather.

And Maud forgot her brier-torn gown,
And her graceful ankles bare and brown; 30

And listened, while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: "Ah me!
That I the Judge's bride might be!"

"He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.

“ My father should wear a broadcloth coat;
My brother should sail a painted boat. 40

“ I’d dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day.

“ And I’d feed the hungry and clothe the poor,
And all should bless me who left our door.”

The Judge looked back as he climbed the hill,
And saw Maud Muller standing still.

“ A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne’er hath it been my lot to meet.

“ And her modest answer and graceful air
Show her wise and good as she is fair. 50

“ Would she were mine, and I to-day,
Like her, a harvester of hay;

“ No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,
Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,

“ But low of cattle and song of birds,
And health and quiet and loving words.”

But he thought of his sisters, proud and cold,
And his mother, vain of her rank and gold.

So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone. 60

But the lawyers smiled that afternoon,
When he hummed in court an old love-tune;

And the young girl mused beside the well
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.

He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power.

Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow,
He watched a picture come and go;

And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes
Looked out in their innocent surprise. 70

Oft, when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead;

And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms.

And the proud man sighed, with a secret pain,
"Ah, that I were free again!

"Free as when I rode that day,
Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay."

She wedded a man unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door. 80

But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain,
Left their traces on heart and brain.

And oft, when the summer sun shone hot
On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,

And she heard the little spring brook fall
Over the roadside, through the wall,

In the shade of the apple-tree again
She saw a rider draw his rein;

And, gazing down with timid grace,
She felt his pleased eyes read her face. 90

Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls;

The weary wheel to a spinnet turned,
The tallow candle an astral burned,

And for him who sat by the chimney lug,
Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,

A manly form at her side she saw,
And joy was duty and love was law.

Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, "It might have been." 100

Alas for maiden, alas for Judge,
For rich repiner and household drudge !

God pity them both ! and pity us all,
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "It might have been !"

Ah, well ! for us all some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes ;

And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away ! 110

1854.

MARY GARVIN

FROM the heart of Waumbek Methna, from the lake
that never fails,
Falls the Saco in the green lap of Conway's intervalles;
There, in wild and virgin freshness, its waters foam
and flow,
As when Darby Field first saw them, two hundred
years ago.

38 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

But, vexed in all its seaward course with bridges,
dams, and mills,
How changed is Saco's stream, how lost its freedom
of the hills,
Since travelled Jocelyn, factor Vines, and stately
Champernoon
Heard on its banks the grey wolf's howl, the trumpet
of the loon !

With smoking axle hot with speed, with steeds of fire
and steam,
Wide-waked To-day leaves Yesterday behind him like
a dream. 10
Still, from the hurrying train of Life, fly backward far
and fast
The milestones of the fathers, the landmarks of the
past.

But human hearts remain unchanged: the sorrow and
the sin,
The loves and hopes and fears of old, are to our own
akin;
And if, in tales our fathers told, the songs our mothers
sung,
Tradition wears a snowy beard, Romance is always
young.

O sharp-lined man of traffic, on Saco's banks to-day !
O mill-girl watching late and long the shuttle's restless
play !
Let, for the once, a listening ear the working hand
beguile,
And lend my old Provincial tale, as suits, a tear or
smile ! 20

The evening gun had sounded from grey Fort Mary's
walls;
Through the forest, like a wild beast, roared and
plunged the Saco's falls.

And westward on the sea-wind, that damp and gusty
grew,
Over cedars darkening inland the smokes of Spurwink
blew.

On the hearth of Farmer Garvin, blazed the crackling
walnut log;
Right and left sat dame and goodman, and between
them lay the dog,

Head on paws, and tail slow wagging, and beside him
on her mat,
Sitting drowsy in the firelight, winked and purred the
mottled cat.

"Twenty years!" said Goodman Garvin, speaking
sadly, under breath,
And his grey head slowly shaking, as one who speaks
of death. 30

The goodwife dropped her needles: "It is twenty years
to-day,
Since the Indians fell on Saco, and stole our child
away."

Then they sank into the silence, for each knew the
other's thought,
Of a great and common sorrow, and words were
needed not.

"Who knocks?" cried Goodman Garvin. The door
was open thrown;
On two strangers, man and maiden, cloaked and furred,
the firelight shone.

One with courteous gesture lifted the bear-skin from
his head;
"Lives here Elkanah Garvin?" "I am he," the good-
man said.

40 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

"Sit ye down, and dry and warm ye, for the night is
chill with rain."

And the goodwife drew the settle, and stirred the fire
amain.

40

The maid unclasped her cloak-hood, the firelight
glistened fair

In her large, moist eyes, and over soft folds of dark
brown hair.

Dame Garvin looked upon her: "It is Mary's self I see !
Dear heart !" she cried, "now tell me, has my child
come back to me ?"

"My name indeed is Mary," said the stranger, sobbing
wild ;

"Will you be to me a mother ? I am Mary Garvin's
child !

"She sleeps by wooded Simcoe, but on her dying day
She bade my father take me to her kinsfolk far away.

"And when the priest besought her to do me no such
wrong,

She said, 'May God forgive me ! I have closed my
heart too long.

50

"When I hid me from my father, and shut out my
mother's call,

I sinned against those dear ones, and the Father of
us all.

"Christ's love rebukes no home-love, breaks no tie
of kin apart ;

Better heresy in doctrine, than heresy of heart.

"Tell me not the Church must censure : she who wept
the Cross beside

Never made her own flesh strangers, nor the claims of
blood denied ;

“ ‘And if she who wronged her parents, with her child
 atones to them,
 Earthly daughter, Heavenly Mother ! thou at least
 wilt not condemn !’

“ So, upon her death-bed lying, my blessed mother
 spake ;
 As we come to do her bidding, so receive us for her
 sake.” 60

“ God be praised !” said Goodwife Garvin, “ He taketh,
 and He gives ;
 He woundeth, but He healeth ; in her child our daughter
 lives !”

“ Amen !” the old man answered, as he brushed a tear
 away,
 And, kneeling by his hearthstone, said, with reverence,
 “ Let us pray.”

All its Oriental symbols, and its Hebrew paraphrase,
 Warm with earnest life and feeling, rose his prayer of
 love and praise.

But he started at beholding, as he rose from off his
 knee,
 The stranger cross his forehead with the sign of
 Papistrie.

“ What is this ?” cried Farmer Garvin. “ Is an English
 Christian’s home
 A chapel or a mass-house, that you make the sign of
 Rome ?” 70

Then the young girl knelt beside him, kissed his
 trembling hand, and cried :

“ Oh, forbear to chide my father ; in that faith my
 mother died !

42 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

“On her wooden cross at Simcoe the dews and sun-
shine fall,
As they fall on Spurwink’s graveyard; and the dear
God watches all !”

The old man stroked the fair head that rested on his
knee;

“Your words, dear child,” he answered, “are God’s
rebuke to me.

“Creed and right perchance may differ, yet our faith
and hope be one.

Let me be your father’s father, let him be to me a son.”

When the horn, on Sabbath morning, through the still
and frosty air,

From Spurwink, Pool, and Black Point, called to ser-
mon and to prayer, 80

To the goodly house of worship, where, in order due
and fit,

As by public vote directed, classed and ranked the
people sit;

Mistress first and goodwife after, clerkly squire before
the clown,

From the brave coat, lace-embroidered, to the grey
frock, shading down;

From the pulpit read the preacher, “Goodman Garvin
and his wife

Fain would thank the Lord, whose kindness has fol-
lowed them through life,

“For the great and crowning mercy, that their daughter,
from the wild,

Where she rests (they hope in God’s peace), has sent
to them her child;

“And the prayers of all God’s people they ask, that they
 may prove
 Not unworthy, through their weakness, of such special
 proof of love.” 90

As the preacher prayed, uprising, the aged couple
 stood,
 And the fair Canadian also, in her modest maiden-
 hood.

Thought the elders, grave and doubting, “She is
 Papist born and bred;”
 Thought the young men, “’Tis an angel in Mary
 Garvin’s stead !”

1856.

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE

I supposed the story dated back at least a century. I knew
 nothing of the participators, and the narrative of the ballad
 was pure fancy.

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
 Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
 On Apuleius’s Golden Ass,
 Or one-eyed Calendar’s horse of brass,
 Witch astride of a human back,
 Islam’s prophet on Al-Borák,—
 The strangest ride that ever was sped
 Was Ireson’s out from Marblehead !
 Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead !

11

Body of turkey, head of owl,
 Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
 Feathered and ruffled in every part,
 Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
 Scores of women, old and young,
 Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,

Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
 Shouting and singing the shrill refrain: 19
 "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
 Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corrd in a corrt
 By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
 Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
 Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
 Bacchus round some antique vase,
 Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
 Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
 With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns' twang,
 Over and over the Manads sang: 30
 "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
 Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corrd in a corrt
 By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Small pity for him!—He sailed away
 From a leaking ship, in Chaleur Bay,—
 Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
 With his own town's-people on her deck!
 "Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.
 Back he answered, "Sink or swim!
 Brag of your catch of fish again!" 40
 And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
 Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
 That wreck shall lie for evermore.
 Mother and sister, wife and maid,
 Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
 Over the moaning and rainy sea,—
 Looked for the coming that might not be! 50
 What did the winds and the sea-birds say
 Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
 Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,
 Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
 Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives grey,
 Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
 Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound, 60
 Hulks of old sailors run aground,
 Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
 And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
 "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
 Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
 By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Sweetly along the Salem road
 Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
 Little the wicked skipper knew
 Of the fields so green and the sky so blue. 70
 Riding there in his sorry trim,
 Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
 Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
 Of voices shouting, far and near:
 "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
 Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
 By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbours!" at last he cried,—
 "What to me is this noisy ride?
 What is the shame that clothes the skin 80
 To the nameless horror that lives within?
 Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
 And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
 Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
 The hand of God and the face of the dead!"
 Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
 Said, "God has touched him! why should we?"
 Said an old wife mourning her only son. 91
 "Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"

So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
 Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
 And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
 And left him alone with his shame and sin.

Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead !

99

1857.

TELLING THE BEES

A remarkable custom, brought from the Old Country, formerly prevailed in the rural districts of New England. On the death of a member of the family the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives dressed in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home.

HERE is the place; right over the hill
 Runs the path I took;
 You can see the gap in the old wall still,
 And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
 And the poplars tall;
 And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-
 yard,
 And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
 And down by the brink 10
 Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,
 Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
 Heavy and slow;
 And the same rose blows, and the same sun
 glows,
 And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There's the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze;
And the June sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm. 20

I mind me how with a lover's care
From my Sunday coat
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and
throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed,—
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now,—the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves, 30
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,—
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,—
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black. 40

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, "My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day:
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away."

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
 With his cane to his chin,
 The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
 Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

50

And the song she was singing ever since
 In my ear sounds on:—
 “Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
 Mistress Mary is dead and gone!”

1858.

THE SWAN SONG OF PARSON AVERY

WHEN the reaper's task was ended, and the summer
 wearing late,
 Parson Avery sailed from Newbury, with his wife and
 children eight,
 Dropping down the river-harbour in the shallop
 “Watch and Wait.”

Pleasantly lay the clearings in the mellow summer-
 morn,
 With the newly planted orchards dropping their fruits
 first-born,
 And the home-roofs like brown islands amid a sea of
 corn.

Broad meadows reached out seaward the tided creeks
 between,
 And hills rolled wave-like inland, with oaks and walnuts
 green;—
 A fairer home, a goodlier land, his eyes had never seen.

Yet away sailed Parson Avery, away where duty
 led,
 And the voice of God seemed calling, to break the
 living bread
 To the souls of fishers starving on the rocks of Marble-
 head.

10

All day they sailed: at nightfall the pleasant land-
breeze died,
The blackening sky, at midnight, its starry lights
denied,
And far and low the thunder of tempest prophesied !

Blotted out were all the coast-lines, gone were rock, and
wood, and sand ;
Grimly anxious stood the skipper with the rudder in
his hand,
And questioned of the darkness what was sea and what
was land.

And the preacher heard his dear ones, nestled round
him, weeping sore:
" Never heed, my little children ! Christ is walking
on before 20
To the pleasant land of heaven, where the sea shall be
no more."

All at once the great cloud parted, like a curtain drawn
aside,
To let down the torch of lightning on the terror far and
wide ;
And the thunder and the whirlwind together smote
the tide.

There was wailing in the shallop, woman's wail and
man's despair,
A crash of breaking timbers on the rocks so sharp and
bare,
And, through it all, the murmur of Father Avery's
prayer.

From his struggle in the darkness with the wild waves
and the blast,
On a rock, where every billow broke above him as it
passed, 29
Alone, of all his household, the man of God was cast.

50 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

There a comrade heard him praying, in the pause of
wave and wind:

“ All my own have gone before me, and I linger just
behind;

Not for life I ask, but only for the rest Thy ransomed
find !

“ In this night of death I challenge the promise of Thy
word !—

Let me see the great salvation of which mine ears have
heard !—

Let me pass from hence forgiven, through the grace of
Christ, our Lord !

“ In the baptism of these waters wash white my every
sin,

And let me follow up to Thee my household and my
kin !

Open the sea-gate of Thy heaven, and let me enter
in !”

When the Christian sings his death-song, all the listen-
ing heavens draw near, 40

And the angels, leaning over the walls of crystal,
hear

How the notes so faint and broken swell to music in
God's ear.

The ear of God was open to His servant's last request:
As the strong wave swept him downward the sweet
hymn upward pressed,

And the soul of Father Avery went, singing, to its rest.

There was wailing on the mainland, from the rocks of
Marblehead;

In the stricken church of Newbury the notes of prayer
were read;

And long, by board and hearthstone, the living mourned
the dead.

And still the fishers outbound, or scudding from the
 squall,
 With grave and reverent faces, the ancient tale recall,
 When they see the white waves breaking on the Rock
 of Avery's Fall ! 51

1858.

MY PLAYMATE

THE pines were dark on Ramoth hill,
 Their song was soft and low ;
 The blossoms in the sweet May wind
 Were falling like the snow.

The blossoms drifted at our feet,
 The orchard birds sang clear ;
 The sweetest and the saddest day
 It seemed of all the year.

For, more to me than birds or flowers,
 My playmate left her home, 10
 And took with her the laughing spring,
 The music and the bloom.

She kissed the lips of kith and kin,
 She laid her hand in mine :
 What more could ask the bashful boy
 Who fed her father's kine ?

She left us in the bloom of May :
 The constant years told o'er
 Their seasons with as sweet May morns,
 But she came back no more. 20

I walk, with noiseless feet, the round
 Of uneventful years ;
 Still o'er and o'er I sow the spring
 And reap the autumn ears.

She lives where all the golden year
 Her summer roses blow;
 The dusky children of the sun
 Before her come and go.

There haply with her jewelled hands
 She smooths her silken gown,— 30
 No more the homespun lap wherein
 I shook the walnuts down.

The wild grapes wait us by the brook,
 The brown nuts on the hill,
 And still the May-day flowers make sweet
 The woods of Follymill.

The lilies blossom in the pond,
 The bird builds in the tree,
 The dark pines sing on Ramoth hill
 The slow song of the sea. 40

I wonder if she thinks of them,
 And how the old time seems,—
 If ever the pines of Ramoth wood
 Are sounding in her dreams.

I see her face, I hear her voice;
 Does she remember mine?
 And what to her is now the boy
 Who fed her father's kine?

What cares she that the orioles build
 For other eyes than ours,— 50
 That other hands with nuts are filled,
 And other laps with flowers?

O playmate in the golden time!
 Our mossy seat is green,
 Its fringing violets blossom yet,
 The old trees o'er it lean.

The winds so sweet with birch and fern
 A sweeter memory blow;
 And there in spring the veeries sing
 The song of long ago.

60

And still the pines of Ramoth wood
 Are moaning like the sea,—
 The moaning of the sea of change
 Between myself and thee!

1860.

COBBLER KEEZAR'S VISION

[Cobbler Keezar was a noted character among the first settlers in
 the valley of the Merrimac.]

THE beaver cut his timber
 With patient teeth that day,
 The minks were fish-wards, and the crows
 Surveyors of highway,—

When Keezar sat on the hillside
 Upon his cobbler's form,
 With a pan of coals on either hand
 To keep his waxed-ends warm.

And there, in the golden weather,
 He stitched and hammered and sung;
 In the brook he moistened his leather,
 In the pewter mug his tongue.

10

Well knew the tough old Teuton
 Who brewed the stoutest ale,
 And he paid the goodwife's reckoning
 In the coin of song and tale.

The songs they still are singing
 Who dress the hills of vine,
 The tales that haunt the Brocken
 And whisper down the Rhine.

20

Woodsy and wild and lonesome,
 The swift stream wound away,
 Through birches and scarlet maples
 Flashing in foam and spray,—

Down on the sharp-horned ledges
 Plunging in steep cascade,
 Tossing its white-maned waters
 Against the hemlock's shade.

Woodsy and wild and lonesome,
 East and west and north and south ; 30
 Only the village of fishers
 Down at the river's mouth ;

Only here and there a clearing,
 With its farm-house rude and new,
 And tree-stumps, swart as Indians,
 Where the scanty harvest grew.

No shout of home-bound reapers,
 No vintage-song he heard,
 And on the green no dancing feet
 The merry violin stirred. 40

" Why should folk be glum," said Keezar,
 " When Nature herself is glad,
 And the painted woods are laughing
 At the faces so sour and sad ?"

Small heed had the careless cobbler
 What sorrow of heart was theirs
 Who travailed in pain with the births of God,
 And planted a state with prayers. —

Hunting of witches and warlocks.
 Smiting the heathen horde. — 50
 One hand on the mason's trowel.
 And one on the soldier's sword !

But give him his ale and cider,
Give him his pipe and song,
Little he cared for Church or State,
Or the balance of right and wrong.

" 'Tis work, work, work," he muttered,--

" And for rest a snuffle of psalms !"

He smote on his leathern apron
With his brown and waxen palms. 60

" Oh for the purple harvests
Of the days when I was young !
For the merry grape-stained maidens,
And the pleasant songs they sung !

" Oh for the breath of vineyards,
Of apples and nuts and wine !
For an oar to row and a breeze to blow
Down the grand old river Rhine !"

A tear in his blue eye glistened,
And dropped on his beard so grey. 70

" Old, old am I," said Keezar,
" And the Rhine flows far away !"

But a cunning man was the cobbler ;
He could call the birds from the trees,
Charm the black snake out of the ledges,
And bring back the swarming bees.

All the virtues of herbs and metals,
All the lore of the woods, he knew,
And the arts of the Old World mingled
With the marvels of the New. 80

Well he knew the tricks of magic,
And the lapstone on his knee
Had the gift of the Mormon's goggles
Or the stone of Doctor Dee.

For the mighty master Agrippa
 Wrought it with spell and rhyme
 From a fragment of mystic moonstone
 In the tower of Nettesheim

To a cobbler Minnesinger
 The marvellous stone gave he,— 90
 And he gave it, in turn, to Keezar,
 Who brought it over the sea.

He held up that mystic lapstone,
 He held it up like a lens,
 And he counted the long years coming
 By twenties and by tens.

“ One hundred years,” quoth Keezar,
 “ And fifty have I told:
 Now open the new before me,
 And shut me out the old !” 100

Like a cloud of mist, the blackness
 Rolled from the magic stone,
 And a marvellous picture mingled
 The unknown and the known.

Still ran the stream to the river,
 And river and ocean joined ;
 And there were the bluffs and the blue sea-line
 And cold north hills behind.

But the mighty forest was broken
 By many a steepled town, 110
 By many a white-walled farm-house,
 And many a garner brown.

Turning a score of mill-wheels,
 The stream no more ran free ;
 White sails on the winding river,
 White sails on the far-off sea.

Below in the noisy village
The flags were floating gay,
And shone on a thousand faces
The light of a holiday. 120

Swiftly the rival ploughmen
Turned the brown earth from their shares;
Here were the farmer's treasures,
There were the craftsman's wares.

Golden the goodwife's butter,
Ruby her currant-wine;
Grand were the strutting turkeys,
Fat were the beeves and swine.

Yellow and red were the apples,
And the ripe pears russet-brown, 130
And the peaches had stolen blushes
From the girls who shook them down.

And with blooms of hill and wildwood,
That shame the toil of art,
Mingled the gorgeous blossoms
Of the garden's tropic heart.

"What is it I see?" said Keezar:
"Am I here, or am I there?
Is it a fête at Bingen?
Do I look on Frankfort fair? 140

"But where are the clowns and puppets,
And imps with horns and tail?
And where are the Rhenish flagons?
And where is the foaming ale?

"Strange things, I know, will happen,—
Strange things the Lord permits;
But that doughty folk should be jolly
Puzzles my poor old wits.

“ Here are smiling manly faces,
 And the maiden's step is gay ;
 Nor sad by thinking, nor mad by drinking,
 Nor mopes, nor fools, are they. 150

“ Here's pleasure without regretting,
 And good without abuse,
 The holiday and the bridal
 Of beauty and of use.

“ Here's a priest and there is a Quaker,
 Do the cat and dog agree ?
 Have they burned the stocks for oven-wood ?
 Have they cut down the gallows-tree ? 160

“ Would the old folk know their children ?
 Would they own the graceless town,
 With never a ranter to worry
 And never a witch to drown ?”

Loud laughed the cobbler Keezar,
 Laughed like a school-boy gay ;
 Tossing his arms above him,
 The lapstone rolled away.

It rolled down the rugged hillside,
 It spun like a wheel bewitched, 170
 It plunged through the leaning willows,
 And into the river pitched.

There, in the deep, dark water,
 The magic stone lies still,
 Under the leaning willows
 In the shadow of the hill.

But oft the idle fisher
 Sits on the shadowy bank,
 And his dreams make marvellous pictures
 Where the wizard's lapstone sank. 180

And still, in the summer twilights,
When the river seems to run
Out from the inner glory,
Warm with the melted sun,

The weary mill-girl lingers
Beside the charmèd stream,
And the sky and the golden water
Shape and colour her dream.

Fair wave the sunset gardens,
The rosy signals fly;
Her homestead beckons from the cloud,
And love goes sailing by.

190

1861.

AMY WENTWORTH

HER fingers shame the ivory keys
They dance so light along;
The bloom upon her parted lips
Is sweeter than the song.

O perfumed suitor, spare thy smiles !
Her thoughts are not of thee;
She better loves the salted wind,
The voices of the sea.

Her heart is like an outbound ship
That at its anchor swings;
The murmur of the stranded shell
Is in the song she sings.

10

She sings, and, smiling, hears her praise,
But dreams the while of one
Who watches from his sea-blown deck
The icebergs in the sun.

She questions all the winds that blow,
 And every fog-wreath dim,
 And bids the sea-birds flying north
 Bear messages to him.

20

She speeds them with the thanks of men
 He perilled life to save,
 And grateful prayers like holy oil
 To smooth for him the wave.

Brown Viking of the fishing-smack !
 Fair toast of all the town !—
 The skipper's jerkin ill beseems
 The lady's silken gown !

But ne'er shall Amy Wentworth wear
 For him the blush of shame
 Who dares to set his manly gifts
 Against her ancient name.

30

The stream is brightest at its spring,
 And blood is not like wine;
 Nor honoured less than he who heirs
 Is he who founds a line.

Full lightly shall the prize be won,
 If love be Fortune's spur;
 And never maiden stoops to him
 Who lifts himself to her.

40

Her home is brave in Jaffrey Street,
 With stately stairways worn
 By feet of old Colonial knights
 And ladies gentle-born.

Still green about its ample porch
The English ivy twines.
Trained back to show in English oak
The herald's carven signs.

And on her, from the wainscot old,
Ancestral faces frown.— 50
And this has worn the soldier's sword,
And that the judge's gown.

But, strong of will and proud as they,
She walks the gallery floor
As if she trod her sailor's deck
By stormy Labrador !

The sweetbrier blooms on Kittery-side,
And green are Elliot's bowers ;
Her garden is the pebbled beach,
The mosses are her flowers. 60

She looks across the harbour-bar
To see the white gulls fly ;
His greeting from the Northern sea
Is in their clanging cry.

She hums a song, and dreams that he,
As in its romance old,
Shall homeward ride with silken sails
And masts of beaten gold !

Oh, rank is good, and gold is fair,
And high and low mate ill ; 70
But love has never known a law
Beyond its own sweet will !

THE COUNTESS

Count François de Vipart with his cousin Joseph Rochemont de Poyen came to the United States in the early part of the nineteenth century. They took up their residence at Rocks Village on the Merrimac, where they both married. The wife of Count Vipart was Mary Ingalls, who, as my father remembered her, was a very lovely young girl. Her wedding dress, as described by a lady still living, was "pink satin with an overdress of white lace, and white satin slippers." She died in less than a year after her marriage. Her husband returned to his native country. He lies buried in the family tomb of the Viparts at Bordeaux.

OVER the wooded northern ridge,
Between its houses brown,
To the dark tunnel of the bridge
The street comes straggling down.

You catch a glimpse, through birch and pine,
Of gable, roof, and porch,
The tavern with its swinging sign,
The sharp horn of the church.

The river's steel-blue crescent curves
To meet, in ebb and flow,
The single broken wharf that serves
For sloop and gundelow.

10

With salt sea-scents along its shores
The heavy hay-boats crawl,
The long antennæ of their oars
In lazy rise and fall.

Along the grey abutment's wall
The idle shad-net dries;
The toll-man in his cobbler's stall
Sits smoking with closed eyes.

20

You hear the pier's low undertone
Of waves that chafe and gnaw;
You start, — a skipper's horn is blown
To raise the creaking draw.

At times a blacksmith's anvil sounds
With slow and sluggard beat,
Or stage-coach on its dusty rounds
Wakes up the staring street.

A place for idle eyes and ears,
A cobwebbed nook of dreams; 30
Left by the stream whose waves are years
The stranded village seems.

And there, like other moss and rust,
The native dweller clings,
And keeps, in uninquiring trust,
The old, dull round of things.

The fisher drops his patient lines,
The farmer sows his grain,
Content to hear the murmuring pines
Instead of railroad-train. 40

Go where, along the tangled steep
That slopes against the west,
The hamlet's buried idlers sleep
In still profounder rest.

Throw back the locust's flowery plume,
The birch's pale-green scarf,
And break the web of brier and bloom
From name and epitaph.

A simple muster-roll of death,
Of pomp and romance shorn, 50
The dry, old names that common breath
Has cheapened and outworn.

Yet pause by one low mound, and part
The wild vines o'er it laced,
And read the words by rustic art
Upon its headstone traced.

Haply yon white-haired villager
 Of fourscore years can say
 What means the noble name of her
 Who sleeps with common clay.

60

An exile from the Gascon land
 Found refuge here and rest,
 And loved, of all the village band,
 Its fairest and its best.

He knelt with her on Sabbath morns,
 He worshipped through her eyes,
 And on the pride that doubts and scorns
 Stole in her faith's surprise.

Her simple daily life he saw
 By homeliest duties tried,
 In all things by an untaught law
 Of fitness justified.

70

For her his rank aside he laid;
 He took the hue and tone
 Of lowly life and toil, and made
 Her simple ways his own.

Yet still, in gay and careless ease,
 To harvest-field or dance
 He brought the gentle courtesies,
 The nameless grace of France.

80

And she who taught him love not less
 From him she loved in turn
 Caught in her sweet unconsciousness
 What love is quick to learn.

Each grew to each in pleased accord,
 Nor knew the gazing town
 If she looked upward to her lord
 Or he to her looked down.

How sweet, when summer's day was o'er,
His violin's mirth and wail, 90
The walk on pleasant Newbury's shore,
The river's moonlit sail !

Ah ! life is brief, though love be long ;
The altar and the bier,
The burial hymn and bridal song,
Were both in one short year !

Her rest is quiet on the hill,
Beneath the locust's bloom ;
Far off her lover sleeps as still
Within his scutcheoned tomb. 100

The Gascon lord, the village maid,
In death still clasp their hands ;
The love that levels rank and grade
Unites their severed lands.

What matter whose the hillside grave,
Or whose the blazoned stone ?
For ever to her western wave
Shall whisper blue Garonne !

O Love !—so hallowing every soil
That gives thy sweet flower room, 110
Wherever, nursed by ease or toil,
The human heart takes bloom !—

Plant of lost Eden, from the sod
Of sinful earth unriven,
White blossom of the trees of God
Dropped down to us from heaven !—

This tangled waste of mound and stone
Is holy for thy sake ;
A sweetness which is all thy own
Breathes out from fern and brake. 120

And while ancestral pride shall twine
 The Gascon's tomb with flowers,
 Fall sweetly here, O song of mine,
 With summer's bloom and showers !

And let the lines that severed seem
 Unite again in thee,
 As western wave and Gallic stream
 Are mingled in one sea !

128

1863.

AMONG THE HILLS

PRELUDE.

ALONG the roadside, like the flowers of gold
 That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,
 Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,
 And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers
 Hang motionless upon their upright staves.
 The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,
 Wing-weary with its long flight from the south,
 Unfelt; yet, closely scanned, yon maple leaf
 With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,
 Confesses it. The locust by the wall 10
 Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.
 A single hay-cart down the dusty road
 Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep
 On the load's top. Against the neighbouring hill,
 Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,
 The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift still
 Defied the dog-star. Through the open door
 A drowsy smell of flowers—grey heliotrope,
 And white sweet clover, and shy mignonette—
 Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends 20
 To the pervading symphony of peace.

No time is this for hands long over-worn
 To task their strength: and (unto Him be praise

Who giveth quietness !) the stress and strain
Of years that did the work of centuries
Have ceased, and we can draw our breath once more
Freely and full. So, as yon harvesters
Make glad their nooning underneath the elms
With tale and riddle and old snatch of song,
I lay aside grave themes, and idly turn 30
The leaves of memory's sketch-book, dreaming o'er
Old summer pictures of the quiet hills,
And human life, as quiet, at their feet.

And yet not idly all. A farmer's son
Proud of field-lore and harvest craft, and feeling
All their fine possibilities, how rich
And restful even poverty and toil
Become when beauty, harmony, and love
Sit at their humble hearth as angels sat
At evening in the patriarch's tent, when man 40
Makes labour noble, and his farmer's frock
The symbol of a Christian chivalry
Tender and just and generous to her
Who clothes with grace all duty; still, I know
Too well the picture has another side,—
How wearily the grind of toil goes on
Where love is wanting, how the eye and ear
And heart are starved amidst the plenitude
Of nature, and how hard and colourless
Is life without an atmosphere. I look 50
Across the lapse of half a century,
And call to mind old homesteads, where no flower
Told that the spring had come, but evil weeds,
Nightshade and rough-leaved burdock in the place
Of the sweet doorway greeting of the rose
And honeysuckle, where the house walls seemed
Blistering in sun, without a tree or vine
To cast the tremulous shadow of its leaves
Across the curtainless windows, from whose panes
Fluttered the signal rags of shiftlessness. 60
Within, the cluttered kitchen floor, unwashed
(Broom-clean I think they called it); the best room

Stifling with cellar-damp, shut from the air
 In hot midsummer, bookless, pictureless
 Save the inevitable sampler hung
 Over the fireplace, or a mourning piece,
 A green-haired woman, peony-cheeked, beneath
 Impossible willows; the wide-throated hearth
 Bristling with faded pine-boughs half concealing
 The piled-up rubbish at the chimney's back; 70
 And, in sad keeping with all things about them,
 Shrill, querulous women, sour and sullen men,
 Untidy, loveless, old before their time,
 With scarce a human interest save their own
 Monotonous round of small economies,
 Or the poor scandal of the neighbourhood;
 Blind to the beauty everywhere revealed,
 Treading the May-flowers with regardless feet;
 For them the song-sparrow and the bobolink
 Sang not, nor winds made music in the leaves; 80
 For them in vain October's holocaust
 Burned, gold and crimson, over all the hills,
 The sacramental mystery of the woods.
 Church-goers, fearful of the unseen Powers,
 But grumbling over pulpit-tax and pew-rent,
 Saving, as shrewd economists, their souls
 And winter pork with the least possible outlay
 Of salt and sanctity; in daily life
 Showing as little actual comprehension
 Of Christian charity and love and duty, 90
 As if the Sermon on the Mount had been
 Outdated like a last year's almanac:
 Rich in broad woodlands and in half-tilled fields,
 And yet so pinched and bare and comfortless,
 The veriest straggler limping on his rounds,
 The sun and air his sole inheritance,
 Laughed at a poverty that paid its taxes,
 And hugged his rags in self-complacency!

Not such should be the homesteads of a land
 Where whoso wisely wills and acts may dwell 100
 As king and lawgiver, in broad-acred state,

With beauty, art, taste, culture, books, to make
His hour of leisure richer than a life
Of fourscore to the barons of old time.
Our yeoman should be equal to his home
Set in the fair, green valleys, purple walled,
A man to match his mountains, not to creep
Dwarfed and abased below them. I would fain
In this light way (of which I needs must own
With the knife-grinder of whom Canning sings, 110
"Story, God bless you ! I have none to tell you !")
Invite the eye to see and heart to feel
The beauty and the joy within their reach,—
Home, and home loves, and the beatitudes
Of nature free to all. Haply in years
That wait to take the places of our own,
Heard where some breezy balcony looks down
On happy homes, or where the lake in the moon
Sleeps dreaming of the mountains, fair as Ruth,
In the old Hebrew pastoral, at the feet 120
Of Boaz, even this simple lay of mine
May seem the burden of a prophecy,
Finding its late fulfilment in a change
Slow as the oak's growth, lifting manhood up
Through broader culture, finer manners, love,
And reverence, to the level of the hills.

O Golden Age, whose light is of the dawn,
And not of sunset, forward, not behind,
Flood the new heavens and earth, and with thee
bring
All the old virtues, whatsoever things 130
Are pure and honest and of good repute,
But add thereto whatever bard has sung
Or seer has told of when in trance and dream
They saw the Happy Isles of prophecy !
Let Justice hold her scale, and Truth divide
Between the right and wrong ; but give the heart
The freedom of its fair inheritance ;
Let the poor prisoner, cramped and starved so long,
At Nature's table feast his ear and eye

With joy and wonder; let all harmonies 140
 Of sound, form, colour, motion, wait upon
 The princely guest, whether in soft attire
 Of leisure clad, or the coarse frock of toil,
 And, lending life to the dead form of faith,
 Give human nature reverence for the sake
 Of One who bore it, making it divine
 With the ineffable tenderness of God;
 Let common need, the brotherhood of prayer,
 The heirship of an unknown destiny,
 The unsolved mystery round about us, make 150
 A man more precious than the gold of Ophir.
 Sacred, inviolate, unto whom all things
 Should minister, as outward types and signs
 Of the eternal beauty which fulfils
 The one great purpose of creation, Love,
 The sole necessity of Earth and Heaven !

For weeks the clouds had raked the hills
 And vexed the vales with raining,
 And all the woods were sad with mist,
 And all the brooks complaining. 160

At last, a sudden night-storm tore
 The mountain veils asunder,
 And swept the valleys clean before
 The besom of the thunder.

Through Sandwich notch the west-wind sang
 Good-morrow to the cotter;
 And once again Chocorua's horn
 Of shadow pierced the water.

Above his broad lake Ossipee,
 Once more the sunshine wearing, 170
 Stooped, tracing on that silver shield
 His grim armorial bearing.

Clear drawn against the hard blue sky,
 The peaks had winter's keenness;
 And, close on autumn's frost, the vales
 Had more than June's fresh greenness.

Again the sodden forest floors
 With golden lights were checkered,
 Once more rejoicing leaves in wind
 And sunshine danced and flickered. 180

It was as if the summer's late
 Atoning for its sadness
 Had borrowed every season's charm
 To end its days in gladness.

I call to mind those banded vales
 Of shadow and of shining,
 Through which, my hostess at my side,
 I drove in day's declining.

We held our sideling way above
 The river's whitening shallows, 190
 By homesteads old, with wide-flung barns
 Swept through and through by swallows;

By maple orchards, belts of pine
 And larches climbing darkly
 The mountain slopes, and, over all,
 The great peaks rising starkly.

You should have seen that long hill-range
 With gaps of brightness riven,—
 How through each pass and hollow streamed
 The purpling lights of heaven,— 200

Rivers of gold-mist flowing down
 From far celestial fountains,—
 The great sun flaming through the rifts
 Beyond the wall of mountains !

We paused at last where home-bound cows
 Brought down the pasture's treasure,
 And in the barn the rhythmic flails
 Beat out a harvest measure.

We heard the night-hawk's sullen plunge,
 The crow his tree-mates calling: 210
 The shadows lengthening down the slopes
 About our feet were falling.

And through them smote the level sun
 In broken lines of splendour,
 Touched the grey rocks and made the green
 Of the shorn grass more tender.

The maples bending o'er the gate,
 Their arch of leaves just tinted
 With yellow warmth, the golden glow
 Of coming autumn hinted. 220

Keen white between the farm-house showed,
 And smiled on porch and trellis,
 The fair democracy of flowers
 That equals cot and palace.

And weaving garlands for her dog,
 'Twixt chidings and caresses,
 A human flower of childhood shook
 The sunshine from her tresses.

On either hand we saw the signs
 Of fancy and of shrewdness, 230
 Where taste had wound its arms of vines
 Round thrift's uncomely rudeness.

The sun-brown farmer in his frock
 Shook hands, and called to Mary.
 Bare-armed, as Juno might, she came,
 White-aproned from her dairy.

Her air, her smile, her motions, told
 Of womanly completeness;
 A music as of household songs
 Was in her voice of sweetness. 240

Not fair alone in curve and line,
 But something more and better,
 The secret charm eluding art,
 Its spirit, not its letter;—

An inborn grace that nothing lacked
 Of culture or appliance,—
 The warmth of genial courtesy,
 The calm of self-reliance.

Before her queenly womanhood
 How dared our hostess utter 250
 The paltry errand of her need
 To buy her fresh-churned butter ?

She led the way with housewife pride,
 Her goodly store disclosing,
 Full tenderly the golden balls
 With practised hands disposing.

Then, while along the western hills
 We watched the changeful glory
 Of sunset, on our homeward way,
 I heard her simple story. 260

The early crickets sang; the stream
 Plashed through my friend's narration:
 Her rustic patois of the hills
 Lost in my free translation.

“More wise,” she said, “than those who swarm
 Our hills in middle summer,
 She came, when June's first roses blow,
 To greet the early comer.

“ From school and ball and rout she came,
 The city's fair, pale daughter, 270
 To drink the wine of mountain air
 Beside the Bearcamp Water.

“ Her step grew firmer on the hills
 That watch our homesteads over;
 On cheek and lip, from summer fields,
 She caught the bloom of clover.

“ For health comes sparkling in the streams
 From cool Chocorua stealing:
 There's iron in our Northern winds;
 Our pines are trees of healing. 280

“ She sat beneath the broad-armed elms
 That skirt the mowing meadow,
 And watched the gentle west-wind weave
 The grass with shine and shadow.

“ Beside her, from the summer heat
 To share her grateful screening,
 With forehead bare, the farmer stood,
 Upon his pitchfork leaning.

“ Framed in its damp, dark locks, his face
 Had nothing mean or common, — 290
 Strong, manly, true, the tenderness
 And pride beloved of woman.

“ She looked up, glowing with the health
 The country air had brought her,
 And, laughing, said: ‘ You lack a wife,
 Your mother lacks a daughter.

“ ‘ To mend your frock and bake your bread
 You do not need a lady:
 Be sure among these brown old homes
 Is some one waiting ready, — 300

“ ‘Some fair, sweet girl with skilful hand
And cheerful heart for treasure,
Who never played with ivory keys,
Or danced the polka’s measure.’

“ ‘He bent his black brows to a frown,
He set his white teeth tightly.
‘Tis well,’ he said, ‘for one like you
To choose for me so lightly.

“ ‘You think, because my life is rude
I take no note of sweetness: 310
I tell you love has naught to do
With meetness or unmeetness.

“ ‘Itself its best excuse, it asks
No leave of pride or fashion
When silken zone or homespun frock
It stirs with throbs of passion.

“ ‘You think me deaf and blind: you bring
Your winning graces hither
As free as if from cradle-time
We two had played together. 320

“ ‘You tempt me with your laughing eyes,
Your cheek of sundown’s blushes,
A motion as of waving grain,
A music as of thrushes.

“ ‘The plaything of your summer sport,
The spells you weave around me
You cannot at your will undo,
Nor leave me as you found me.

“ ‘You go as lightly as you came,
Your life is well without me; 330
What care you that these hills will close
Like prison-walls about me ?

“ ‘ No mood is mine to seek a wife,
Or daughter for my mother :
Who loves you loses in that love
All power to love another !

“ ‘ I dare your pity or your scorn,
With pride your own exceeding ;
I fling my heart into your lap
Without a word of pleading.’

340

“ She looked up in his face of pain
So archly, yet so tender :
‘ And if I lend you mine,’ she said,
‘ Will you forgive the lender ?

“ ‘ Nor frock nor tan can hide the man ;
And see you not, my farmer,
How weak and fond a woman waits
Behind the silken armour ?

“ ‘ I love you : on that love alone,
And not my worth, presuming,
Will you not trust for summer-fruit
The tree in May-day blooming ?’

350

“ Alone the hangbird overhead,
His hair-swung cradle straining,
Looked down to see love’s miracle,—
The giving that is gaining.

“ And so the farmer found a wife,
His mother found a daughter :
There looks no happier home than hers
On pleasant Bearcamp Water.

360

“ Flowers spring to blossom where she walks
The careful ways of duty ;
Our hard, stiff lines of life with her
Are flowing curves of beauty.

" Our homes are cheerier for her sake,
Our door-yards brighter blooming,
And all about the social air
Is sweeter for her coming.

" Unspoken homilies of peace
Her daily life is preaching; 370
The still refreshment of the dew
Is her unconscious teaching.

" And never tenderer hand than hers
Unknits the brow of ailing;
Her garments to the sick man's ear
Have music in their trailing.

" And when, in pleasant harvest moons,
The youthful huskers gather,
Or sleigh-drives on the mountain ways
Defy the winter weather,— 380

" In sugar-camps, when south and warm
The winds of March are blowing,
And sweetly from its thawing veins
The maple's blood is flowing,—

" In summer, where some lilled pond
Its virgin zone is baring,
Or where the ruddy autumn fire
Lights up the apple-paring,—

" The coarseness of a ruder time
Her finer mirth displaces, 390
A subtler sense of pleasure fills
Each rustic sport she graces.

" Her presence lends its warmth and health
To all who come before it.
If woman lost us Eden, such
As she alone restore it.

" For larger life and wiser aims
 The farmer is her debtor ;
 Who holds to his another's heart
 Must needs be worse or better.

400

" Through her his civic service shows
 A purer-toned ambition ;
 No double consciousness divides
 The man and politician.

" In party's doubtful ways he trusts
 Her instincts to determine ;
 At the loud polls, the thought of her
 Recalls Christ's Mountain Sermon.

" He owns her logic of the heart,
 And wisdom of unreason,
 Supplying, while he doubts and weighs,
 The needed word in season.

410

" He sees with pride her richer thought,
 Her fancy's freer ranges ;
 And love thus deepened to respect
 Is proof against all changes.

" And if she walks at ease in ways
 His feet are slow to travel,
 And if she reads with cultured eyes
 What his may scarce unravel.

420

" Still clearer, for her keener sight
 Of beauty and of wonder,
 He learns the meaning of the hills
 He dwelt from childhood under.

" And higher, warmed with summer lights,
 Or winter-crowned and hoary,
 The ridged horizon lifts for him
 Its inner veils of glory.

“ He has his own free, bookless lore,
The lessons nature taught him,
The wisdom which the woods and hills
And toiling men have brought him: 43°

“ The steady force of will whereby
Her flexile grace seems sweeter;
The sturdy counterpoise which makes
Her woman's life completer;

“ A latent fire of soul which lacks
No breath of love to fan it;
And wit, that, like his native brooks,
Plays over solid granite. 44°

“ How dwarfed against his manliness
She sees the poor pretension,
The wants, the aims, the follies, born
Of fashion and convention !

“ How life behind its accidents
Stands strong and self-sustaining,
The human fact transcending all
The losing and the gaining.

“ And so, in grateful interchange
Of teacher and of hearer,
Their lives their true distinctness keep
While daily drawing nearer. 45°

“ And if the husband or the wife
In home's strong light discovers
Such slight defaults as failed to meet
The blinded eyes of lovers,

“ Why need we care to ask ?—who dreams
Without their thorns of roses,
Or wonders that the truest steel
The readiest spark discloses ? 46°

“ For still in mutual sufferance lies
 The secret of true living;
 Love scarce is love that never knows
 The sweetness of forgiving.

“ We send the Squire to General Court,
 He takes his young wife thither;
 No prouder man election day
 Rides through the sweet June weather.

“ He sees with eyes of manly trust
 All hearts to her inclining;
 Not less for him his household light
 That others share its shining.”

470

Thus, while my hostess spake, there grew
 Before me, warmer tinted
 And outlined with a tenderer grace,
 The picture that she hinted.

The sunset smouldered as we drove
 Beneath the deep hill-shadows.
 Below us wreaths of white fog walked
 Like ghosts the haunted meadows.

480

Sounding the summer night, the stars
 Dropped down their golden plummets;
 The pale arc of the Northern lights
 Rose o'er the mountain summits,

Until, at last, beneath its bridge,
 We heard the Bearcamp flowing,
 And saw across the mapled lawn
 The welcome home-lights glowing.

And, musing on the tale I heard,
 'T were well, thought I, if often
 To rugged farm-life came the gift
 To harmonize and soften;

490

If more and more we found the troth
 Of fact and fancy plighted,
 And culture's charm and labour's strength
 In rural homes united,—

The simple life, the homely hearth,
 With beauty's sphere surrounding,
 And blessing toil where toil abounds
 With graces more abounding.

500

1868.

NAUHAUGHT, THE DEACON

NAUHAUGHT, the Indian deacon, who of old
 Dwelt, poor but blameless, where his narrowing Cape
 Stretches its shrunk arm out to all the winds
 And the relentless smiting of the waves,
 Awoke one morning from a pleasant dream
 Of a good angel dropping in his hand
 A fair, broad gold-piece, in the name of God.

He rose and went forth with the early day
 Far inland, where the voices of the waves
 Melowed and mingled with the whispering leaves, 10
 As, through the tangle of the low, thick woods,
 He searched his traps. Therein nor beast nor bird
 He found; though meanwhile in the reedy pools
 The otter plashed, and underneath the pines
 The partridge drummed: and as his thoughts went back
 To the sick wife and little child at home,
 What marvel that the poor man felt his faith
 Too weak to bear its burden,—like a rope
 That, strand by strand uncoiling, breaks above
 The hand that grasps it. “Even now, O Lord! 20
 Send me,” he prayed, “the angel of my dream!
 Nauhaught is very poor; he cannot wait.”

Even as he spake he heard at his bare feet
 A low, metallic clink, and, looking down,

He saw a dainty purse with disks of gold
 Crowding its silken net. Awhile he held
 The treasure up before his eyes, alone
 With his great need, feeling the wondrous coins
 Slide through his eager fingers, one by one. 29
 So then the dream was true. The angel brought
 One broad piece only; should he take all these?
 Who would be wiser, in the blind, dumb woods?
 The loser, doubtless rich, would scarcely miss
 This dropped crumb from a table always full.
 Still, while he mused, he seemed to hear the cry
 Of a starved child; the sick face of his wife
 Tempted him. Heart and flesh in fierce revolt
 Urged the wild licence of his savage youth
 Against his later scruples. Bitter toil, 39
 Prayer, fasting, dread of blame, and pitiless eyes
 To watch his halting,—had he lost for these
 The freedom of the woods;—the hunting-grounds
 Of happy spirits for a walled-in heaven
 Of everlasting psalms? One healed the sick
 Very far off thousands of moons ago:
 Had he not prayed Him night and day to come
 And cure his bed-bound wife? Was there a hell?
 Were all his fathers' people writhing there—
 Like the poor shell-fish set to boil alive—
 For ever, dying never? If he kept 50
 This gold, so needed, would the dreadful God
 Torment him like a Mohawk's captive stuck
 With slow-consuming splinters? Would the saints
 And the white angels dance and laugh to see him
 Burn like a pitch-pine torch? His Christian garb
 Seemed falling from him; with the fear and shame
 Of Adam naked at the cool of day,
 He gazed around. A black snake lay in coil
 On the hot sand, a crow with sidelong eye
 Watched from a dead bough. All his Indian lore
 Of evil blending with a convert's faith 61
 In the supernal terrors of the Book,
 He saw the Tempter in the coiling snake
 And ominous, black-winged bird; and all the while

The low rebuking of the distant waves
 Stole in upon him like the voice of God
 Among the trees of Eden. Girding up
 His soul's loins with a resolute hand, he thrust
 The base thought from him: "Nauhaught, be a man!
 Starve, if need be; but, while you live, look out
 From honest eyes on all men, unashamed. 71
 God help me! I am deacon of the church,
 A baptized, praying Indian! Should I do
 This secret meanness, even the barken knots
 Of the old trees would turn to eyes to see it,
 The birds would tell of it, and all the leaves
 Whisper above me: 'Nauhaught is a thief!'

The sun would know it, and the stars that hide
 Behind his light would watch me, and at night
 Follow me with their sharp, accusing eyes. 80
 Yea, Thou, God, seest me!" Then Nauhaught drew
 Closer his belt of leather, dulling thus
 The pain of hunger, and walked bravely back
 To the brown fishing-hamlet by the sea;
 And, pausing at the inn-door, cheerily asked:
 "Who hath lost aught to-day?"

"I," said a voice;
 "Ten golden pieces, in a silken purse,
 My daughter's handiwork." He looked, and lo!
 One stood before him in a coat of frieze,
 And the glazed hat of a seafaring man, 90
 Shrewd-faced, broad-shouldered, with no trace of
 wings.

Marvelling, he dropped within the stranger's hand
 The silken web, and turned to go his way.
 But the man said: "A tithe at least is yours;
 Take it in God's name as an honest man."
 And as the deacon's dusky fingers closed
 Over the golden gift, "Yea, in God's name
 I take it, with a poor man's thanks," he said.
 So down the street that, like a river of sand,
 Ran, white in sunshine, to the summer sea, 100
 He sought his home, singing and praising God;
 And when his neighbours in their careless way

Spoke of the owner of the silken purse—
 A Wellfleet skipper, known in every port
 That the Cape opens in its sandy wall—
 He answered, with a wise smile, to himself:
 "I saw the angel where they see a man."

1870.

THE SISTERS

ANNIE and Rhoda, sisters twain,
 Woke in the night to the sound of rain,

The rush of wind, the ramp and roar
 Of great waves climbing a rocky shore.

Annie rose up in her bed-gown white,
 And looked out into the storm and night.

"Hush, and hearken!" she cried in fear,
 "Hearest thou nothing, sister dear?"

"I hear the sea, and the splash of rain,
 And roar of the north-east hurricane.

10

"Get thee back to the bed so warm,
 No good comes of watching a storm.

"What is it to thee, I fain would know,
 That waves are roaring and wild winds blow?"

"No lover of thine's afloat to miss
 The harbour-lights on a night like this."

"But I heard a voice cry out my name,
 Up from the sea on the wind it came!"

"Twice and thrice have I heard it call,
 And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall!" 20

On her pillow the sister tossed her head.
“ Hall of the Heron is safe,” she said.

“ In the tautest schooner that ever swam
He rides at anchor in Annisquam.

“ And, if in peril from swamping sea
Or lee shore rocks, would he call on thee ?”

But the girl heard only the wind and tide,
And wringing her small white hands she cried :

“ O sister Rhoda, there’s something wrong ;
I hear it again, so loud and long. 30

“ ‘ Annie ! Annie ! ’ I hear it call,
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall !”

Up sprang the elder, with eyes aflame,
“ Thou liest ! He never would call thy name !

“ If he did, I would pray the wind and sea
To keep him for ever from thee and me !”

Then out of the sea blew a dreadful blast ;
Like the cry of a dying man it passed.

The young girl hushed on her lips a groan,
But through her tears a strange light shone,— 40

The solemn joy of her heart’s release
To own and cherish its love in peace.

“ Dearest !” she whispered, under breath,
“ Life was a lie, but true is death.

“ The love I hid from myself away
Shall crown me now in the light of day.

“ My ears shall never to wooer list,
Never by lover my lips be kissed.

"Sacred to thee am I henceforth,
Thou in heaven and I on earth!"

50

She came and stood by her sister's bed:
"Hall of the Heron is dead!" she said.

"The wind and the waves their work have done,
We shall see him no more beneath the sun.

"Little will reck that heart of thine;
It loved him not with a love like mine.

"I, for his sake, were he but here,
Could hem and 'broider thy bridal gear,

"Though hands should tremble and eyes be wet,
And stitch for stitch in my heart be set. 60

"But now my soul with his soul I wed;
Thine the living, and mine the dead!"

1871.

MARGUERITE

MASSACHUSETTS BAY, 1760.

Upward of one thousand of the Acadian peasants forcibly taken
from their homes on the Gaspereau and Basin of Minas were
assigned to the several towns of the Massachusetts colony, the
children being bound by the authorities to service or labour.

THE robins sang in the orchard, the buds into blossoms
grew;

Little of human sorrow the buds and the robins knew!

Sick, in an alien household, the poor French neutral
lay;

Into her lonesome garret fell the light of the April
day,

Through the dusty window, curtained by the spider's
warp and woof,
On the loose-laid floor of hemlock, on oaken ribs of
roof,

The bedquilt's faded patchwork, the tea-cups on the
stand,
The wheel with flaxen tangle, as it dropped from her
sick hand !

What to her was the song of the robin, or warm morning
light,
As she lay in the trance of the dying, heedless of sound
or sight ?

10

Done was the work of her hands, she had eaten her
bitter bread ;
The world of the alien people lay behind her dim and
dead.

But her soul went back to its child-time ; she saw the
sun o'erflow
With gold the Basin of Minas, and set over Gas-
pereau ;

The low, bare flats at ebb-tide, the rush of the sea at
flood,
Through inlet and creek and river, from dike to upland
wood ;

The gulls in the red of morning, the fish-hawk's rise and
fall,
The drift of the fog in moonshine, over the dark coast-
wall.

She saw the face of her mother, she heard the song she
sang ;
And far off, faintly, slowly, the bell for vespers rang !

19

38 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

By her bed the hard-faced mistress sat, smoothing the
wrinkled sheet,
Peering into the face, so helpless, and feeling the ice-
cold feet.

With a vague remorse atoning for her greed and long
abuse,
By care no longer heeded and pity too late for use.

Up the stairs of the garret softly the son of the mistress
stepped,
Leaned over the head-board, covering his face with his
hands, and wept.

Outspake the mother, who watched him sharply, with
brow a-frown:

“What ! love you the Papist, the beggar, the charge of
the town ?”

“Be she Papist or beggar who lies here, I know and
God knows

I love her, and fain would go with her wherever she
goes !

30

“O mother ! that sweet face came pleading, for love so
athirst.

You saw but the town-charge ; I knew her God’s angel
at first.”

Shaking her grey head, the mistress hushed down a
bitter cry ;

And awed by the silence and shadow of death drawing
nigh,

She murmured a psalm of the Bible ; but closer the
young girl pressed.

With the last of her life in her fingers, the cross to her
breast.

“ My son, come away,” cried the mother, her voice cruel
grown.

“ She is joined to her idols, like Ephraim; let her
alone !”

But he knelt with his hand on her forehead, his lips to
her ear,

And he called back the soul that was passing: “ Mar-
guerite, do you hear ?” 40

She paused on the threshold of Heaven; love, pity,
surprise,

Wistful, tender, lit up for an instant the cloud of her
eyes.

With his heart on his lips he kissed her, but never her
cheek grew red,

And the words the living long for he spake in the ear
of the dead.

And the robins sang in the orchard, where buds to
blossoms grew ;

Of the folded hands and the still face never the robins
knew ! 46

1871

THE ROBIN

My old Welsh neighbour over the way
Crept slowly out in the sun of spring,
Pushed from her ears the locks of grey,
And listened to hear the robin sing.

Her grandson, playing at marbles, stopped,
And, cruel in sport as boys will be,
Tossed a stone at the bird, who hopped
From bough to bough in the apple-tree.

“ Nay !” said the grandmother ; “ have you not
heard,

My poor, bad boy ! of the fiery pit, 10
And how, drop by drop, this merciful bird
Carries the water that quenches it ?

“He brings cool dew in his little bill,
And lets it fall on the souls of sin:
You can see the mark on his red breast still
Of fires that scorch as he drops it in.

“My poor Bron rhuddyn ! my breast-burned bird,
Singing so sweetly from limb to limb,
Very dear to the heart of Our Lord
Is he who pities the lost like Him !” 20

“Amen !” I said to the beautiful myth ;
“Sing, bird of God, in my heart as well :
Each good thought is a drop wherewith
To cool and lessen the fires of hell.

“Prayers of love like rain-drops fall,
Tears of pity are cooling dew,
And dear to the heart of Our Lord are all
Who suffer like Him in the good they do !”

1871.

THE PENNSYLVANIA PILGRIM

HAIL to posterity !
Hail, future men of Germanopolis !
Let the young generations yet to be
Look kindly upon this.
Think how your fathers left their native land,—
Dear German-land ! O sacred hearths and
homes !—
And, where the wild beast roams,
In patience planned
New forest-homes beyond the mighty sea,
There undisturbed and free
To live as brothers of one family.
What pains and cares befell,
What trials and what fears,

Remember, and wherein we have done well
Follow our footsteps, men of coming years !
Where we have failed to do
Aright, or wisely live,
Be warned by us, the better way pursue,
And, knowing we were human, even as you,
Pity us and forgive ! 20
Farewell, Posterity !
Farewell, dear Germany !
For evermore farewell !

*From the Latin of FRANCIS DANIEL PASTORIUS in the Germantown
Records. 1688.*

PRELUDE.

I SING the Pilgrim of a softer clime
And milder speech than those brave men's who
brought
To the ice and iron of our winter time
A will as firm, a creed as stern, and wrought
With one mailed hand, and with the other fought.
Simply, as fits my theme, in homely rhyme
I sing the blue-eyed German Spener taught, 30
Through whose veiled, mystic faith the Inward Light,
Steady and still, an easy brightness, shone,
Transfiguring all things in its radiance white.
The garland which his meekness never sought
I bring him; over fields of harvest sown
With seeds of blessing, now to ripeness grown,
I bid the sower pass before the reapers' sight.

Never in tenderer quiet lapsed the day
From Pennsylvania's vales of spring away,
Where, forest-walled, the scattered hamlets lay 40

Along the wedded rivers. One long bar
Of purple cloud, on which the evening star
Shone like a jewel on a scimitar,

92 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

Held the sky's golden gateway. Through the deep
Hush of the woods a murmur seemed to creep,
The Schuylkill whispering in a voice of sleep.

All else was still. The oxen from their ploughs
Rested at last, and from their long day's browse
Came the dun files of Krisheim's home-bound cows.

And the young city, round whose virgin zone
The rivers like two mighty arms were thrown,
Marked by the smoke of evening fires alone, 50

Lay in the distance, lovely even then
With its fair women and its stately men
Gracing the forest court of William Penn,

Urban yet sylvan; in its rough-hewn frames
Of oak and pine the dryads held their claims,
And lent its streets their pleasant woodland names.

Anna Pastorius down the leafy lane
Looked city-ward, then stooped to prune again 60
Her vines and simples, with a sigh of pain.

For fast the streaks of ruddy sunset paled
In the oak clearing, and, as daylight failed,
Saw, overhead, the dusky night-birds sailed.

Again she looked: between green walls of shade,
With low-bent head as if with sorrow weighed,
Daniel Pastorius slowly came and said,

"God's peace be with thee, Anna!" Then he stood
Silent before her, wrestling with the mood
Of one who sees the evil and not good. 70

"What is it, my Pastorius?" As she spoke,
A slow, faint smile across his features broke,
Sadder than tears. "Dear heart," he said, "our folk

“ Are even as others. Yea, our goodliest Friends
Are frail; our elders have their selfish ends,
And few dare trust the Lord to make amends

“ For duty’s loss. So even our feeble word
For the dumb slaves the startled meeting heard
As if a stone its quiet waters stirred;

“ And, as the clerk ceased reading, there began 80
A ripple of dissent which downward ran
In widening circles, as from man to man.

“ Somewhat was said of running before sent,
Of tender fear that some their guide outwent,
Troublers of Israel. I was scarce intent

“ On hearing, for behind the reverend row
Of gallery Friends, in dumb and piteous show,
I saw, methought, dark faces full of woe.

“ And, in the spirit, I was taken where
They toiled and suffered; I was made aware 90
Of shame and wrath and anguish and despair !

“ And while the meeting smothered our poor plea
With cautious phrase, a Voice there seemed to be,
‘ As ye have done to these ye do to Me !’

“ So it all passed; and the old tithe went on
Of anise, mint, and cumin, till the sun
Set, leaving still the weightier work undone.

“ Help, for the good man faileth ! Who is strong,
If these be weak ? Who shall rebuke the wrong,
If these consent ? How long, O Lord ! how long !”

He ceased; and, bound in spirit with the bound,
With folded arms, and eyes that sought the ground,
Walked musingly his little garden round. 103

About him, beaded with the falling dew,
Rare plants of power and herbs of healing grew,
Such as Van Helmont and Agrippa knew.

For, by the lore of Gorlitz' gentle sage,
With the mild mystics of his dreamy age
He read the herbal signs of nature's page, 109

As once he heard in sweet Von Merlau's bowers
Fair as herself, in boyhood's happy hours,
The pious Spener read his creed in flowers.

"The dear Lord give us patience!" said his wife,
Touching with finger-tip an aloe, rife
With leaves sharp-pointed like an Aztec knife

Or Carib spear, a gift to William Penn
From the rare gardens of John Evelyn,
Brought from the Spanish Main by merchantmen.

"See this strange plant its steady purpose hold,
And, year by year, its patient leaves unfold, 120
Till the young eyes that watched it first are old.

"But some time, thou hast told me, there shall come
A sudden beauty, brightness, and perfume;
The century-moulded bud shall burst in bloom.

"So may the seed which hath been sown to-day
Grow with the years, and, after long delay,
Break into bloom, and God's eternal Yea

"Answer at last the patient prayers of them
Who now, by faith alone, behold its stem
Crowned with the flowers of Freedom's diadem. 139

"Meanwhile, to feel and suffer, work and wait,
Remains for us. 'The wrong indeed is great,
But love and patience conquer soon or late.'"

"Well hast thou said, my Anna!" Tenderer
Than youth's caress upon the head of her
Pastorius laid his hand. "Shall we demur

"Because the vision tarrieth? In an hour
We dream not of, the slow-grown bud may flower,
And what was sown in weakness rise in power!"

Then through the vine-draped door whose legend
read, 140

"Procul este profani!" Anna led
To where their child upon his little bed

Looked up and smiled. "Dear heart," she said, "if we
Must bearers of a heavy burden be,
Our boy, God willing, yet the day shall see

"When from the gallery to the farthest seat,
Slave and slave-owner shall no longer meet,
But all sit equal at the Master's feet."

On the stone hearth the blazing walnut block
Set the low walls a-glimmer, showed the cock 150
Rebuking Peter on the Van Wyck clock,

Shone on old tomes of law and physic, side
By side with Fox and Behmen, played at hide
And seek with Anna, midst her household pride

Of flaxen webs, and on the table, bare
Of costly cloth or silver cup, but where,
Tasting the fat shads of the Delaware,

The courtly Penn had praised the goodwife's cheer,
And quoted Horace o'er her home-brewed beer,
Till even grave Pastorius smiled to hear, 160

In such a home, beside the Schuylkill's wave,
He dwelt in peace with God and man, and gave
Food to the poor and shelter to the slave.

For all too soon the New World's scandal shamed
 The righteous code by Penn and Sidney framed,
 And men withheld the human rights they claimed.

And slowly wealth and station sanction lent.
 And hardened avarice, on its gains intent,
 Stifled the inward whisper of dissent.

Yet all the while the burden rested sore 170
 On tender hearts. At last Pastorius bore
 Their warning message to the Church's door

In God's name; and the leaven of the word
 Wrought ever after in the souls who heard,
 And a dead conscience in its grave-clothes stirred

To troubled life, and urged the vain excuse
 Of Hebrew custom, patriarchal use,
 Good in itself if evil in abuse.

Gravely Pastorius listened, not the less 180
 Discerning through the decent fig-leaf dress
 Of the poor plea its shame of selfishness.

One Scripture rule, at least, was unforgot;
 He hid the outcast, and bewrayed him not;
 And, when his prey the human hunter sought,

He scrupled not, while Anna's wise delay
 And proffered cheer prolonged the master's stay,
 To speed the black guest safely on his way.

Yet, who shall guess his bitter grief who lends
 His life to some great cause, and finds his friends
 Shame or betray it for their private ends ? 190

How felt the Master when His chosen strove
 In childish folly for their seats above;
 And that fond mother, blinded by her love,

Besought Him that her sons, beside His throne,
Might sit on either hand ? Amidst his own
A stranger oft, companionless and lone,

God's priest and prophet stands. The martyr's pain
Is not alone from scourge and cell and chain ;
Sharper the pang when, shouting in his train,

His weak disciples by their lives deny 200
The loud hosannas of their daily cry,
And make their echo of his truth a lie.

His forest home no hermit's cell he found,
Guests, motley-minded, drew his hearth around,
And held armed truce upon its neutral ground.

There Indian chiefs with battle-bows unstrung,
Strong, hero-limbed, like those whom Homer sung,
Pastorius fancied, when the world was young,

Came with their tawny women, lithe and tall,
Like bronzes in his friend Von Rodeck's hall, 210
Comely, if black, and not unpleasing all.

There hungry folk in homespun drab and grey
Drew round his board on Monthly Meeting day,
Genial, half merry in their friendly way,

Or, haply, pilgrims from the Fatherland,
Weak, timid, homesick, slow to understand
The New World's promise, sought his helping hand.

Or painful Kelpius from his hermit den
By Wissahickon, maddest of good men,
Dreamed o'er the Chiliast dreams of Petersen. 220

Deep in the woods, where the small river slid
Snake-like in shade, the Helmstadt Mystic hid,
Weird as a wizard, over arts forbid,

Reading the books of Daniel and of John,
 And Behmen's Morning-Redness, through the Stone
 Of Wisdom, vouchsafed to his eyes alone,

Whereby he read what man ne'er read before,
 And saw the visions man shall see no more,
 Till the great angel, striding sea and shore,

Shall bid all flesh await, on land or ships, 230
 The warning trump of the Apocalypse.
 Shattering the heavens before the dread eclipse.

Or meek-eyed Mennonist his bearded chin
 Leaned o'er the gate; or Ranter, pure within,
 Aired his perfection in a world of sin.

Or, talking of old home scenes, Op der Graaf
 Teased the low back-log with his shodden staff,
 Till the red embers broke into a laugh

And dance of flame, as if they fain would cheer
 The rugged face, half tender, half austere, 240
 Touched with the pathos of a homesick tear !

Or Sluyter, saintly familist, whose word
 As law the Brethren of the Manor heard,
 Announced the speedy terrors of the Lord.

And turned, like Lot at Sodom, from his race,
 Above a wrecked world with complacent face
 Riding secure upon his plank of grace !

Haply, from Finland's birchen groves exiled,
 Manly in thought, in simple ways a child,
 His white hair floating round his visage mild, 250

The Swedish pastor sought the Quaker's door,
 Pleased from his neighbour's lips to hear once more
 His long-disused and ha't forgotten lore.

For both could baffle Babel's lingual curse,
And speak in Bion's Doric, and rehearse
Cleanthes' hymn or Virgil's sounding verse.

And oft Pastorius and the meek old man
Argued as Quaker and as Lutheran,
Ending in Christian love, as they began.

With lettered Lloyd on pleasant morns he strayed
Where Sommerhausen over vales of shade 261
Looked miles away, by every flower delayed,

Or song of bird, happy and free with one
Who loved, like him, to let his memory run
Over old fields of learning, and to sun

Himself in Plato's wise philosophies,
And dream with Philo over mysteries
Whereof the dreamer never finds the keys;

To touch all themes of thought, nor weakly stop
For doubt of truth, but let the buckets drop 270
Deep down and bring the hidden waters up.

For there was freedom in that wakening time
Of tender souls; to differ was not crime;
The varying bells made up the perfect chime.

On lips unlike was laid the altar's coal,
The white, clear light, tradition-coloured, stole
Through the stained oriel of each human soul.

Gathered from many sects, the Quaker brought
His old beliefs, adjusting to the thought 279
That moved his soul the creed his fathers taught.

One faith alone, so broad that all mankind
Within themselves its secret witness find.
The soul's communion with the Eternal Mind,

100 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

The Spirit's law, the Inward Rule and Guide,
Scholar and peasant, lord and serf, allied,
The polished Penn and Cromwell's Ironside.

As still in Hemskereck's Quaker Meeting, face
By face in Flemish detail, we may trace
How loose-mouthed boor and fine ancestral grace

Sat in close contrast,—the clipt-headed churl, 290
Broad market-dame, and simple serving-girl
By skirt of silk and periwig in curl !

For soul touched soul ; the spiritual treasure-trove
Made all men equal, none could rise above
Nor sink below that level of God's love.

So, with his rustic neighbours sitting down,
The homespun frock beside the scholar's gown,
Pastorius to the manners of the town

Added the freedom of the woods, and sought
The bookless wisdom by experience taught, 300
And learned to love his new-found home, while not

Forgetful of the old ; the seasons went
Their rounds, and somewhat to his spirit lent
Of their own calm and measureless content.

Glad even to tears, he heard the robin sing
His song of welcome to the Western spring,
And bluebird borrowing from the sky his wing.

And when the miracle of autumn came,
And all the woods with many-coloured flame 307
Of splendour, making summer's greenness tame,

Burned, unconsumed, a voice without a sound
Spake to him from each kindled bush around,
And made the strange, new landscape holy ground !

And when the bitter north-wind, keen and swift,
Swept the white street and piled the dooryard drift,
He exercised, as Friends might say, his gift

Of verse, Dutch, English, Latin, like the hash
Of corn and beans in Indian succotash;
Dull, doubtless, but with here and there a flash

Of wit and fine conceit,—the good man's play 320
Of quiet fancies, meet to while away
The slow hours measuring off an idle day.

At evening, while his wife put on her look
Of love's endurance, from its niche he took
The written pages of his ponderous book.

And read, in half the languages of man,
His "Rusca Apium," which with bees began,
And through the gamut of creation ran.

Or, now and then, the missive of some friend
In grey Altorf or storied Nürnberg penned 330
Dropped in upon him like a guest to spend

The night beneath his roof-tree. Mystical
The fair Von Merlau spake as waters fall
And voices sound in dreams, and yet withal

Human and sweet, as if each far, low tone,
Over the roses of her gardens blown,
Brought the warm sense of beauty all her own.

Wise Spener questioned what his friend could trace
Of spiritual influx or of saving grace
In the wild natures of the Indian race. 340

And learned Schurmberg, fain, at times, to look
From Talmud, Koran, Veds, and Pentateuch,
Sought out his pupil in his far-off nook,

To query with him of climatic change,
Of bird, beast, reptile, in his forest range,
Of flowers and fruits and simples new and strange.

And thus the Old and New World reached their hands
Across the water, and the friendly lands
Talked with each other from their severed strands.

Pastorius answered all: while seed and root 350
Sent from his new home grew to flower and fruit
Along the Rhine and at the Spessart's foot;

And, in return, the flowers his boyhood knew
Smiled at his door, the same in form and hue,
And on his vines the Rhenish clusters grew.

No idler he; whoever else might shirk,
He set his hand to every honest work,—
Farmer and teacher, court and meeting clerk.

Still on the town seal his device is found, 359
Grapes, flax, and thread-spool on a trefoil ground,
With "Vinum, Linum et Textrinum" wound.

One house sufficed for gospel and for law,
Where Paul and Grotius, Scripture text and saw,
Assured the good, and held the rest in awe.

Whatever legal maze he wandered through,
He kept the Sermon on the Mount in view,
And justice always into mercy grew.

No whipping-post he needed, stocks, nor jail,
Nor ducking-stool; the orchard-thief grew pale
At his rebuke, the vixen ceased to rail, 370

The usurer's grasp released the forfeit land;
The slanderer faltered at the witness-stand,
And all men took his counsel for command.

Was it caressing air, the brooding love
Of tenderer skies than German land knew of,
Green calm below, blue quietness above,

Still flow of water, deep repose of wood
That, with a sense of loving Fatherhood
And childlike trust in the Eternal Good,

379

Softened all hearts, and dulled the edge of hate,
Hushed strife, and taught impatient zeal to wait.
The slow assurance of the better state ?

Who knows what goadings in their sterner way
O'er jagged ice, relieved by granite grey,
Blew round the men of Massachusetts Bay ?

What hate of heresy the east-wind woke ?
What hints of pitiless power and terror spoke
In waves that on their iron coast-line broke ?

Be it as it may: within the Land of Penn
The sectary yielded to the citizen,
And peaceful dwelt the many-creeded men.

390

Peace brooded over all. No trumpet stung
The air to madness, and no steeple flung
Alarums down from bells at midnight rung.

The land slept well. The Indian from his face
Washed all his war-paint off, and in the place
Of battle-marches sped the peaceful chase,

Or wrought for wages at the white man's side,—
Giving to kindness what his native pride
And lazy freedom to all else denied.

400

And well the curious scholar loved the old
Traditions that his swarthy neighbours told
By wigwam-fires when nights were growing cold,

Discerned the fact round which their fancy drew
 Its dreams, and held their childish faith more true
 To God and man than half the creeds he knew.

The desert blossomed round him; wheat-fields rolled
 Beneath the warm wind waves of green and gold;
 The planted ear returned its hundred-fold.

Great clusters ripened in a warmer sun 410
 Than that which by the Rhine stream shines upon
 The purpling hillsides with low vines o'errun.

About each rustic porch the humming-bird
 Tried with light bill, that scarce a petal stirred,
 The Old World flowers to virgin soil transferred;

And the first-fruits of pear and apple, bending
 The young boughs down, their gold and russet blend-
 ing,
 Made glad his heart, familiar odours lending

To the fresh fragrance of the birch and pine,
 Life-everlasting, bay, and eglantine, 420
 And all the subtle scents the woods combine.

Fair First-Day mornings, steeped in summer calm,
 Warm, tender, restful, sweet with woodland balm,
 Came to him, like some mother-hallowed psalm

To the tired grinder at the noisy wheel
 Of labour, winding off from memory's reel
 A golden thread of music. With no peal

Of bells to call them to the house of praise,
 The scattered settlers through green forest-ways
 Walked meeting-ward. In reverent amaze 430

The Indian trapper saw them, from the dim
 Shade of the alders on the rivulet's rim,
 Seek the Great Spirit's house to talk with Him.

There, through the gathered stillness multiplied
And made intense by sympathy, outside
The sparrows sang, and the gold-robin cried,

A-swing upon his elm. A faint perfume
Breathed through the open windows of the room
From locust-trees, heavy with clustered bloom.

Thither, perchance, sore-tried confessors came,
Whose fervour jail nor pillory could tame, 441
Proud of the cropped ears meant to be their shame,

Men who had eaten slavery's bitter bread
In Indian isles; pale women who had bled
Under the hangman's lash, and bravely said

God's message through their prison's iron bars;
And grey old soldier-converts, seamed with scars
From every stricken field of England's wars.

Lowly before the Unseen Presence knelt
Each waiting heart, till haply some one felt 450
On his moved lips the seal of silence melt.

Or, without spoken words, low breathings stole
Of a diviner life from soul to soul,
Baptizing in one tender thought the whole.

When shaken hands announced the meeting o'er,
The friendly group still lingered at the door,
Greeting, inquiring, sharing all the store 457

Of weekly tidings. Meanwhile youth and maid
Down the green vistas of the woodland strayed,
Whispered and smiled and oft their feet delayed.

Did the boy's whistle answer back the thrushes?
Did light girl laughter ripple through the bushes,
As brooks make merry over roots and rushes?

Unvexed the sweet air seemed. Without a wound
The ear of silence heard, and every sound
Its place in Nature's fine accordance found.

And solemn meeting, summer sky and wood,
Old kindly faces, youth and maidenhood
Seemed, like God's new creation, very good !

And, greeting all with quiet smile and word, 470
Pastorius went his way. The unseared bird
Sang at his side; scarcely the squirrel stirred

At his hushed footstep on the mossy sod;
And, wheresoe'er the good man looked or trod,
He felt the peace of nature and of God.

His social life wore no ascetic form,
He loved all beauty, without fear of harm,
And in his veins his Teuton blood ran warm.

Strict to himself, of other men no spy, 480
He made his own no circuit-judge to try
The freer conscience of his neighbours by.

With love rebuking, by his life alone,
Gracious and sweet, the better way was shown,
The joy of one, who, seeking not his own,

And faithful to all scruples, finds at last
The thorns and shards of duty overpast,
And daily life, beyond his hope's forecast,

Pleasant and beautiful with sight and sound,
And flowers upspringing in its narrow round,
And all his days with quiet gladness crowned. 490

He sang not; but, if sometimes tempted strong,
He hummed what seemed like Altorf's Burschen-song,
His good wife smiled and did not count it wrong.

For well he loved his boyhood's brother band;
His Memory, while he trod the New World's strand.
A double-ganger walked the Fatherland !

If, when on frosty Christmas eves the light
Shone on his quiet hearth, he missed the sight
Of Yule-log, Tree, and Christ-child all in white;

And closed his eyes, and listened to the sweet 500
Old wait-songs sounding down his native street,
And watched again the dancers' mingling feet;

Yet not the less, when once the vision passed,
He held the plain and sober maxims fast
Of the dear Friends with whom his lot was cast.

Still all attuned to nature's melodies,
He loved the bird's song in his dooryard trees,
And the low hum of home-returning bees;

The blossomed flax, the tulip-trees in bloom
Down the long street, the beauty and perfume 510
Of apple-boughs, the mingling light and gloom

Of Sommerhausen's woodlands, woven through
With sun-threads; and the music the wind drew,
Mournful and sweet, from leaves it overblew.

And evermore, beneath this outward sense,
And through the common sequence of events,
He felt the guiding hand of Providence

Reach out of space. A Voice spake in his ear,
And lo ! all other voices far and near
Died at that whisper, full of meanings clear. 520

The Light of Life shone round him ; one by one
The wandering lights, that all-misleading run,
Went out like candles paling in the sun.

108 NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY POEMS

That Light he followed, step by step, where'er
It led, as in the vision of the seer
The wheels moved as the spirit in the clear

And terrible crystal moved, with all their eyes
Watching the living splendour sink or rise,
Its will their will, knowing no otherwise.

Within himself he found the law of right, 530
He walked by faith and not the letter's sight,
And read his Bible by the Inward Light.

And if sometimes the slaves of form and rule,
Frozen in their creeds like fish in winter's pool,
Tried the large tolerance of his liberal school,

His door was free to men of every name,
He welcomed all the seeking souls who came,
And no man's faith he made a cause of blame.

But best he loved in leisure hours to see
His own dear Friends sit by him knee to knee, 540
In social converse, genial, frank, and free.

There sometimes silence (it were hard to tell
Who owned it first) upon the circle fell,
Hushed Anna's busy wheel, and laid its spell

On the black boy who grimaced by the hearth,
To solemnize his shining face of mirth;
Only the old clock ticked amidst the dearth

Of sound; nor eye was raised nor hand was stirred
In that soul-sabbath, till at last some word
Of tender counsel or low prayer was heard. 550

Then guests, who lingered but farewell to say
And take love's message, went their homeward way;
So passed in peace the guileless Quaker's day.

His was the Christian's unsung Age of Gold,
A truer idyl than the bards have told
Of Arno's banks or Arcady of old.

Where still the Friends their place of burial keep,
And century-rooted mosses o'er it creep,
The Nürnberg scholar and his helpmeet sleep.

And Anna's aloe ? If it flowered at last 560
In Bartram's garden, did John Woolman cast
A glance upon it as he meekly passed ?

And did a secret sympathy possess
That tender soul, and for the slave's redress
Lend hope, strength, patience ? It were vain to
guess.

Nay, were the plant itself but mythical,
Set in the fresco of tradition's wall
Like Jotham's bramble, mattereth not at all.

Enough to know that, through the winter's frost
And summer's heat, no seed of truth is lost, 570
And every duty pays at last its cost.

For, ere Pastorius left the sun and air,
God sent the answer to his life-long prayer ;
The child was born beside the Delaware,

Who, in the power a holy purpose lends,
Guided his people unto nobler ends,
And left them worthier of the name of Friends.

And lo ! the fullness of the time has come,
And over all the exile's Western home,
From sea to sea the flowers of freedom bloom ! 580

And joy-bells ring, and silver trumpets blow ;
But not for thee, Pastorius ! Even so
The world forgets, but the wise angels know.

CONDUCTOR BRADLEY

A railway conductor who lost his life in an accident on a Connecticut railway, May 9, 1873.

CONDUCTOR BRADLEY, (always may his name
Be said with reverence !) as the swift doom came,
Smitten to death, a crushed and mangled frame,

Sank, with the brake he grasped just where he stood
To do the utmost that a brave man could,
And die, if needful, as a true man should.

Men stooped above him ; women dropped their tears
On that poor wreck beyond all hopes or fears,
Lost in the strength and glory of his years. 9

What heard they ? Lo ! the ghastly lips of pain,
Dead to all thought save duty's, moved again :
" Put out the signals for the other train ! "

No nobler utterance since the world began
From lips of saint or martyr ever ran,
Electric, through the sympathies of man.

Ah me ! how poor and noteless seem to this
The sick-bed dramas of self-consciousness,
Our sensual fears of pain and hopes of bliss !

Oh, grand, supreme endeavour ! Not in vain
That last brave act of failing tongue and brain ! 20
Freighted with life the downward rushing train,

Following the wrecked one, as wave follows wave,
Obeyed the warning which the dead lips gave.
Others he saved, himself he could not save.

Nay, the lost life *was* saved. He is not dead
Who in his record still the earth shall tread
With God's clear aureole shining round his head.

We bow as in the dust, with all our pride
Of virtue dwarfed the noble deed beside.
God give us grace to live as Bradley died ! 30

1873.

KING SOLOMON AND THE ANTS

Out from Jerusalem
The king rode with his great
War chiefs and lords of state,
And Sheba's queen with them ;

Comely, but black withal,
To whom, perchance, belongs
That wondrous Song of songs,
Sensuous and mystical,

Whereto devout souls turn
In fond, ecstatic dream, 10
And through its earth-born theme
The Love of loves discern.

Proud in the Syrian sun,
In gold and purple sheen,
The dusky Ethiop queen
Smiled on King Solomon.

Wisest of men, he knew
The languages of all
The creatures great or small
That trod the earth or flew. 20

Across an ant-hill led
The king's path, and he heard
Its small folk, and their word
He thus interpreted :

"Here comes the king men greet
 As wise and good and just,
 To crush us in the dust
 Under his heedless feet."

The great king bowed his head,
 And saw the wide surprise
 Of the Queen of Sheba's eyes
 As he told her what they said. 30

"O king!" she whispered sweet,
 "Too happy fate have they
 Who perish in thy way
 Beneath thy gracious feet!"

"Thou of the God-lent crown,
 Shall these vile creatures dare
 Murmur against thee where
 The knees of kings kneel down?" 40

"Nay," Solomon replied,
 "The wise and strong should seek
 The welfare of the weak,"
 And turned his horse aside.

His train, with quick alarm,
 Curved with their leader round
 The ant-hill's peopled mound,
 And left it free from harm.

The jewelled head bent low;
 "O king!" she said, "henceforth
 The secret of thy worth
 And wisdom well I know. 50

"Happy must be the State
 Whose ruler heedeth more
 The murmurs of the poor
 Than flatteries of the great."

IN THE "OLD SOUTH"

On the 8th of July, 1677, Margaret Brewster with four other Friends went into the South Church in time of meeting, "in sackcloth, with ashes upon her head, barefoot, and her face blackened," and delivered "a warning from the great God of Heaven and Earth to the Rulers and Magistrates of Boston." For the offence she was sentenced to be "whipped at a cart's tail up and down the Town, with twenty lashes."

SHE came and stood in the Old South Church,
A wonder and a sign,
With a look the old-time sibyls wore,
Half-crazed and half-divine.

Save the mournful sackcloth about her wound,
Unclothed as the primal mother,
With limbs that trembled and eyes that blazed
With a fire she dare not smother.

Loose on her shoulders fell her hair,
With sprinkled ashes grey; 10
She stood in the broad aisle strange and weird
As a soul at the judgement day.

And the minister paused in his sermon's midst,
And the people held their breath,
For these were the words the maiden spoke
Through lips as the lips of death:

"Thus saith the Lord, with equal feet
All men My courts shall tread,
And priest and ruler no more shall eat
My people up like bread ! 20

"Repent ! repent ! ere the Lord shall speak
In thunder and breaking seals !
Let all souls worship Him in the way
His light within reveals."

She shook the dust from her naked feet,
And her sackcloth closer drew,
And into the porch of the awe-hushed church
She passed like a ghost from view.

They whipped her away at the tail o' the cart
 Through half the streets of the town. 30
 But the words she uttered that day nor fire
 Could burn nor water drown.

And now the aisles of the ancient church
 By equal feet are trod,
 And the bell that swings in its belfry rings
 Freedom to worship God !

And now whenever a wrong is done
 It thrills the conscious walls ;
 The stone from the basement cries aloud
 And the beam from the timber calls. 40

There are steeple-houses on every hand,
 And pulpits that bless and ban,
 And the Lord will not grudge the single church
 That is set apart for man.

For in two commandments are all the law
 And the prophets under the sun,
 And the first is last and the last is first,
 And the twain are verily one.

So long as Boston shall Boston be,
 And her bay-tides rise and fall, 50
 Shall freedom stand in the Old South Church
 And plead for the rights of all !

1877.

THE HENCHMAN

My lady walks her morning round,
 My lady's page her fleet greyhound,
 My lady's hair the fond winds stir,
 And all the birds make songs for her.

Her thrushes sing in Rathburn bowers,
 And Rathburn side is gay with flowers ;
 But ne'er like hers, in flower or bird,
 Was beauty seen or music heard.

The distance of the stars is hers ;
The least of all her worshippers, 10
The dust beneath her dainty heel,
She knows not that I see or feel.

Oh, proud and calm !—she cannot know
Where'er she goes with her I go ;
Oh, cold and fair !—she cannot guess
I kneel to share her hound's caress !

Gay knights beside her hunt and hawk,
I rob their ears of her sweet talk ;
Her suitors come from east and west,
I steal her smiles from every guest. 20

Unheard of her, in loving words,
I greet her with the song of birds ;
I reach her with her green-armed bowers,
I kiss her with the lips of flowers.

The hound and I are on her trail,
The wind and I uplift her veil ;
As if the calm, cold moon she were,
And I the tide, I follow her.

As unrebuked as they, I share
The license of the sun and air, 30
And in a common homage hide
My worship from her scorn and pride.

World-wide apart, and yet so near,
I breathe her charm'd atmosphere,
Wherein to her my service brings
The reverence due to holy things.

Her maiden pride, her haughty name,
My dumb devotion shall not shame ;
The love that no return doth crave
To knightly levels lifts the slave. 40

No lance have I, in joust or fight,
 To splinter in my lady's sight;
 But, at her feet, how blest were I
 For any need of hers to die !

1877.

BIRCHBROOK MILL

A NOTELESS stream, the Birchbrook runs
 Beneath its leaning trees;
 That low, soft ripple is its own,
 That dull roar is the sea's.

Of human signs it sees alone
 The distant church spire's tip,
 And, ghost-like, on a blank of grey,
 The white sail of a ship.

No more a toiler at the wheel,
 It wanders at its will;
 Nor dam nor pond is left to tell
 Where once was Birchbrook mill.

10

The timbers of that mill have fed
 Long since a farmer's fires;
 His doorsteps are the stones that ground
 The harvest of his sires.

Man trespassed here; but Nature lost
 No right of her domain;
 She waited, and she brought the old
 Wild beauty back again.

20

By day the sunlight through the leaves
 Falls on its moist, green sod,
 And wakes the violet bloom of spring
 And autumn's golden-rod.

Its birches whisper to the wind,
The swallow dips her wings
In the cool spray, and on its banks
The grey song-sparrow sings.

But from it, when the dark night falls,
The school-girl shrinks with dread; 30
The farmer, home-bound from his fields.
Goes by with quickened tread.

They dare not pause to hear the grind
Of shadowy stone on stone;
The plashing of a water-wheel
Where wheel there now is none.

Has not a cry of pain been heard
Above the clattering mill ?
The pawing of an unseen horse,
Who waits his mistress still ? 40

Yet never to the listener's eye
Has sight confirmed the sound;
A wavering birth line marks alone
The vacant pasture ground.

No ghostly arms fling up to heaven
The agony of prayer;
No spectral steed impatient shakes
His white mane on the air.

The meaning of that common dread
No tongue has fitly told; 50
The secret of the dark surmise
The brook and birches hold.

What nameless horror of the past
Broods here for evermore ?
What ghost his unforgiven sin
Is grinding o'er and o'er ?

Does, then, immortal memory play
 The actor's tragic part,
 Rehearsals of a mortal life
 And unveiled human heart ?

60

God's pity spare a guilty soul
 That drama of its ill,
 And let the scenic curtain fall
 On Birchbrook's haunted mill !

1884.

THE HOMESTEAD

AGAINST the wooded hills it stands,
 Ghost of a dead home, staring through
 Its broken lights on wasted lands
 Where old-time harvests grew.

Unploughed, unsown, by scythe unshorn,
 The poor, forsaken farm-fields lie,
 Once rich and rife with golden corn
 And pale green breadths of rye.

Of healthful herb and flower bereft,
 The garden plot no housewife keeps;
 Through weeds and tangle only left,
 The snake, its tenant, creeps.

10

A lilac spray, still blossom-clad,
 Sways slow before the empty rooms;
 Beside the roofless porch a sad
 Pathetic red rose blooms.

His track, in mould and dust of drouth,
 On floor and hearth the squirrel leaves,
 And in the fireless chimney's mouth
 His web the spider weaves.

20

The leaning barn, about to fall,
Resounds no more on husking eves;
No cattle low in yard or stall,
No thresher beats his sheaves.

So sad, so drear ! It seems almost
Some haunting Presence makes its sign;
That down yon shadowy lane some ghost
Might drive his spectral kine !

O home so desolate and lorn !
Did all thy memories die with thee ? 30
Were any wed, were any born,
Beneath this low roof-tree ?

Whose axe the wall of forest broke,
And let the waiting sunshine through ?
What goodwife sent the earliest smoke
Up the great chimney flue ?

Did rustic lovers hither come ?
Did maidens, swaying back and forth
In rhythmic grace, at wheel and loom,
Make light their toil with mirth ? 40

Did child feet patter on the stair ?
Did boyhood frolic in the snow ?
Did grey age, in her elbow chair,
Knit, rocking to and fro ?

The murmuring brook, the sighing breeze,
The pine's slow whisper, cannot tell;
Low mounds beneath the hemlock-trees
Keep the home secrets well.

Cease, mother-land, to fondly boast
Of sons far off who strive and thrive, 50
Forgetful that each swarming host
Must leave an emptier hive !

O wanderers from ancestral soil,
 Leave noisome mill and chaffering store :
 Gird up your loins for sturdier toil,
 And build the home once more !

Come back to bayberry-scented slopes,
 And fragrant fern, and ground-nut vine ;
 Breathe airs blown over holt and copse
 Sweet with black birch and pine. 60

What matter if the gains are small
 That life's essential wants supply ?
 Your homestead's title gives you all
 That idle wealth can buy.

All that the many-dollared crave,
 The brick-walled slaves of 'Change and mart,
 Lawns, trees, fresh air, and flowers, you have,
 More dear for lack of art.

Your own sole masters, freedom-willed,
 With none to bid you go or stay, 70
 Till the old fields your fathers tilled,
 As manly men as they !

With skill that spares your toiling hands,
 And chemic aid that science brings,
 Reclaim the waste and outworn lands,
 And reign thereon as kings !

POEMS OF NATURE

THE FROST SPIRIT

HE comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes ! You
may trace his footsteps now
On the naked woods and the blasted fields and the
brown hill's withered brow.
He has smitten the leaves of the grey old trees where
their pleasant green came forth,
And the winds, which follow wherever he goes, have
shaken them down to earth.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes ! from
the frozen Labrador,
From the icy bridge of the Northern seas, which the
white bear wanders o'er,
Where the fisherman's sail is stiff with ice, and the
luckless forms below
In the sunless cold of the lingering night into marble
statues grow !

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes ! on the
rushing Northern blast,
And the dark Norwegian pines have bowed as his fearful
breath went past. 10
With an unscorched wing he has hurried on, where the
fires of Hecla glow
On the darkly beautiful sky above and the ancient ice
below.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes ! and
 the quiet lake shall feel
 The torpid touch of his glazing breath, and ring to the
 skater's heel;
 And the streams which danced on the broken rocks, or
 sang to the leaning grass,
 Shall bow again to their winter chain, and in mournful
 silence pass.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes ! Let
 us meet him as we may,
 And turn with the light of the parlour-fire his evil power
 away;
 And gather closer the circle round, when that firelight
 dances high,
 And laugh at the shriek of the baffled Fiend as his
 sounding wing goes by !

20

1830.

THE MERRIMAC

“The Indians speak of a beautiful river, far to the south, which
 they call Merrimac.”—SIEUR DE MONTS, 1604.

STREAM of my fathers ! sweetly still
 The sunset rays thy valley fill;
 Poured slantwise down the long defile,
 Wave, wood, and spire beneath them smile.
 I see the winding Powow fold
 The green hill in its belt of gold,
 And following down its wavy line,
 Its sparkling waters blend with thine.
 There's not a tree upon thy side,
 Nor rock, which thy returning tide
 As yet hath left abrupt and stark
 Above thy evening water-mark;
 No calm cove with its rocky hem,
 No isle whose emerald swells begem
 Thy broad, smooth current; not a sail
 Bowed to the freshening ocean gale;

10

No small boat with its busy oars,
Nor grey wall sloping to thy shores;
Nor farm-house with its maple shade,
Or rigid poplar colonnade, 20
But lies distinct and full in sight,
Beneath this gush of sunset light.
Centuries ago, that harbour-bar,
Stretching its length of foam afar,
And Salisbury's beach of shining sand,
And yonder island's wave-smoothed strand,
Saw the adventurer's tiny sail,
Flit, stooping from the eastern gale;
And o'er these woods and waters broke
The cheer from Britain's hearts of oak, 30
As brightly on the voyager's eye,
Weary of forest, sea, and sky,
Breaking the dull continuous wood,
The Merrimac rolled down his flood;
Mingling that clear pellucid brook,
Which channels vast Agioochook
When springtime's sun and shower unlock
The frozen fountains of the rock,
And more abundant waters given
From that pure lake, "The Smile of Heaven,"
Tributes from vale and mountain-side,— 41
With ocean's dark, eternal tide!

On yonder rocky cape, which braves
The stormy challenge of the waves,
'Midst tangled vine and dwarfish wood,
The hardy Anglo-Saxon stood,
Planting upon the topmost crag
The staff of England's battle-flag;
And, while from out its heavy fold
Saint George's crimson cross unrolled, 50
'Midst roll of drum and trumpet blare,
And weapons brandishing in air,
He gave to that lone promontory
The sweetest name in all his story:

Of her, the flower of Islam's daughters,
Whose harems look on Stamboul's waters,—
Who, when the chance of war had bound
The Moslem chain his limbs around,
Wreathed o'er with silk that iron chain,
Soothed with her smiles his hours of pain, 60
And fondly to her youthful slave
A dearer gift than freedom gave.

But look ! the yellow light no more
Streams down on wave and verdant shore ;
And clearly on the calm air swells
The twilight voice of distant bells.
From Ocean's bosom, white and thin,
The mists come slowly rolling in ;
Hills, woods, the river's rocky rim,
Amidst the sea-like vapour swim, 70
While yonder lonely coast-light, set
Within its wave-washed minaret,
Half quenched, a beamless star and pale,
Shines dimly through its cloudy veil !

Home of my fathers !—I have stood
Where Hudson rolled his lordly flood :
Seen sunrise rest and sunset fade
Along his frowning Palisade ;
Looked down the Appalachian peak
On Juniata's silver streak ; 80
Have seen along his valley gleam
The Mohawk's softly winding stream ;
The level light of sunset shine
Through broad Potomac's hem of pine ;
And autumn's rainbow-tinted banner
Hang lightly o'er the Susquehanna ;
Yet wheresoe'er his step might be,
Thy wandering child looked back to thee !
Heard in his dreams thy river's sound
Of murmuring on its pebbly bound, 90
The unforgotten swell and roar
Of waves on thy familiar shore ;

And saw, amidst the curtained gloom
 And quiet of his lonely room,
 Thy sunset scenes before him pass;
 As, in Agrippa's magic glass,
 The loved and lost arose to view,
 Remembered groves in greenness grew,
 Bathed still in childhood's morning dew,
 Along whose bowers of beauty swept
 Whatever Memory's mourners wept,
 Sweet faces, which the charnel kept,
 Young, gentle eyes, which long had slept;
 And while the gazer leaned to trace,
 More near, some dear familiar face,
 He wept to find the vision flown,—
 A phantom and a dream alone!

100

1841.

HAMPTON BEACH

THE sunlight glitters keen and bright,
 Where, miles away,
 Lies stretching to my dazzled sight
 A luminous belt, a misty light,
 Beyond the dark pine bluffs and wastes of sandy
 grey.

The tremulous shadow of the Sea !
 Against its ground
 Of silvery light, rock, hill, and tree,
 Still as a picture, clear and free,
 With varying outline mark the coast for miles around

On—on—we tread with loose-flung rein
 Our seaward way,
 Through dark-green fields and blossoming grain,
 Where the wild brier-rose skirts the lane,
 And bends above our heads the flowering locust spray.

11

Ha ! like a kind hand on my brow
Comes this fresh breeze,
Cooling its dull and feverish glow,
While through my being seems to flow
The breath of a new life, the healing of the seas ! 20

Now rest we, where this grassy mound
His feet hath set
In the great waters, which have bound
His granite ankles greenly round
With long and tangled moss, and weeds with cool spray
wet.

Good-bye to Pain and Care ! I take
Mine ease to-day :
Here where these sunny waters break,
And ripples this keen breeze, I shake
All burdens from the heart, all weary thoughts away.

I draw a freer breath, I seem 31
Like all I see—
Waves in the sun, the white-winged gleam
Of sea-birds in the slanting beam,
And far-off sails which flit before the south-wind
free.

So when Time's veil shall fall asunder,
The soul may know
No fearful change, nor sudden wonder,
Nor sink the weight of mystery under,
But with the upward rise, and with the vastness
grow. 40

And all we shrink from now may seem
No new revealing ;
Familiar as our childhood's stream,
Or pleasant memory of a dream
The loved and cherished Past upon the new life stealing.

Serene and mild the untried light
 May have its dawning;
And, as in summer's northern night
The evening and the dawn unite,
The sunset hues of Time blend with the soul's new
 morning. 50

I sit alone; in foam and spray
 Wave after wave
Breaks on the rocks which, stern and grey,
Shoulder the broken tide away,
Or murmurs hoarse and strong through mossy cleft and
 cave.

What heed I of the dusty land
 And noisy town ?
I see the mighty deep expand
From its white line of glimmering sand
To where the blue of heaven on bluer waves shuts
 down ! 60

In listless quietude of mind,
 I yield to all
The change of cloud and wave and wind;
And passive on the flood reclined,
I wander with the waves, and with them rise and fall.

But look, thou dreamer ! wave and shore
 In shadow lie;
The night-wind warns me back once more
To where, my native hill-tops o'er,
Bends like an arch of fire the glowing sunset sky. 70

So then, beach, bluff, and wave, farewell !
 I bear with me
No token stone nor glittering shell,
But long and oft shall Memory tell
Of this brief thoughtful hour of musing by the Sea.

A DREAM OF SUMMER

BLAND as the morning breath of June
 The southwest breezes play;
 And, through its haze, the winter noon
 Seems warm as summer's day.
 The snow-plumed Angel of the North
 Has dropped his icy spear;
 Again the mossy earth looks forth,
 Again the streams gush clear.

The fox his hillside cell forsakes,
 The muskrat leaves his nook, 10
 The bluebird in the meadow brakes
 Is singing with the brook.
 "Bear up, O Mother Nature!" cry
 Bird, breeze, and streamlet free;
 "Our winter voices prophesy
 Of summer days to thee!"

So, in those winters of the soul,
 By bitter blasts and drear
 O'erswept from Memory's frozen pole,
 Will sunny days appear. 20
 Reviving Hope and Faith, they show
 The soul its living powers,
 And how beneath the winter's snow
 Lie germs of summer flowers!

The Night is mother of the Day,
 The Winter of the Spring,
 And ever upon old Decay
 The greenest mosses cling.
 Behind the cloud the starlight lurks,
 Through showers the sunbeams fall; 30
 For God, who loveth all His works,
 Has left His hope with all!

THE LAKESIDE

THE shadows round the inland sea
 Are deepening into night;
 Slow up the slopes of Ossipee
 They chase the lessening light.
 Tired of the long day's blinding heat,
 I rest my languid eye,
 Lake of the Hills ! where, cool and sweet,
 Thy sunset waters lie !

Along the sky, in wavy lines,
 O'er isle and reach and bay, 10
 Green-belted with eternal pines,
 The mountains stretch away.
 Below, the maple masses sleep
 Where shore with water blends,
 While midway on the tranquil deep
 The evening light descends.

So seemed it when yon hill's red crown,
 Of old, the Indian trod,
 And, through the sunset air, looked down
 Upon the Smile of God. 20
 To him of light and shade the laws
 No forest sceptic taught;
 Their living and eternal Cause
 His truer instinct sought.

He saw these mountains in the light
 Which now across them shines;
 This lake, in summer sunset bright,
 Walled round with sombering pines.
 God near him seemed; from earth and skies
 His loving voice he heard, 30
 As, face to face, in Paradise.
 Man stood before the Lord.

Thanks, O our Father ! that, like him,
 Thy tender love I see,
 In radiant hill and woodland dim,
 And tinted sunset sea.
 For not in mockery dost Thou fill
 Our earth with light and grace :
 Thou hid'st no dark and cruel will
 Behind Thy smiling face !

40

1849.

ON RECEIVING AN EAGLE'S QUILL FROM LAKE SUPERIOR

ALL day the darkness and the cold
 Upon my heart have lain,
 Like shadows on the winter's sky,
 Like frost upon the pane ;

But now my torpid fancy wakes,
 And, on thy Eagle's plume,
 Rides forth, like Sindbad on his bird,
 Or witch upon her broom !

Below me roar the rocking pines,
 Before me spreads the lake
 Whose long and solemn-sounding waves
 Against the sunset break.

10

I hear the wild Rice-Eater thresh
 The grain he has not sown ;
 I see, with flashing scythe of fire,
 The prairie harvest mown !

I hear the far-off voyager's horn ;
 I see the Yankee's trail,—
 His foot on every mountain-pass,
 On every stream his sail.

20

By forest, lake, and waterfall,
 I see his pedler show;
 The mighty mingling with the mean,
 The lofty with the low.

He's whittling by St. Mary's Falls,
 Upon his loaded wain;
 He's measuring o'er the Pictured Rocks,
 With eager eyes of gain.

I hear the mattock in the mine,
 The axe-stroke in the dell, 30
 The clamour from the Indian lodge,
 The Jesuit chapel bell!

I see the swarthy trappers come
 From Mississippi's springs;
 And war-chiefs with their painted brows,
 And crests of eagle wings.

Behind the scared squaw's birch canoe,
 The steamer smokes and raves;
 And city lots are staked for sale
 Above old Indian graves. 40

I hear the tread of pioneers
 Of nations yet to be;
 The first low wash of waves, where soon
 Shall roll a human sea.

The rudiments of empire here
 Are plastic yet and warm;
 The chaos of a mighty world
 Is rounding into form!

Each rude and jostling fragment soon
 Its fitting place shall find,— 50
 The raw material of a State,
 Its muscle and its mind!

And, westering still, the star which leads
 The New World in its train
 Has tipped with fire the icy spears
 Of many a mountain chain.

The snowy cones of Oregon
 Are kindling on its way;
 And California's golden sands
 Gleam brighter in its ray ! 60

Then blessings on thy eagle quill,
 As, wandering far and wide,
 I thank thee for this twilight dream
 And Fancy's airy ride !

Yet, welcomer than regal plumes,
 Which Western trappers find,
 Thy free and pleasant thoughts, chance sown,
 Like feathers on the wind.

Thy symbol be the mountain-bird,
 Whose glistening quill I hold; 70
 Thy home the ample air of hope,
 And memory's sunset gold !

In thee, let joy with duty join,
 And strength unite with love,
 The eagle's pinions folding round
 The warm heart of the dove !

So, when in darkness sleeps the vale
 Where still the blind bird clings,
 The sunshine of the upper sky
 Shall glitter on thy wings ! 80

SUMMER BY THE LAKESIDE

LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE.

I. NOON.

WHITE clouds, whose shadows haunt the deep,
 Light mists, whose soft embraces keep
 The sunshine on the hills asleep !

O isles of calm ! O dark, still wood !
 And stiller skies that overbrood
 Your rest with deeper quietude !

O shapes and hues, dim beckoning, through
 Yon mountain gaps, my longing view
 Beyond the purple and the blue,

To stiller sea and greener land, 10
 And softer lights and airs more bland,
 And skies,—the hollow of God's hand !

Transfused through you, O mountain friends !
 With mine your solemn spirit blends,
 And life no more hath separate ends.

I read each misty mountain sign,
 I know the voice of wave and pine,
 And I am yours, and ye are mine.

Life's burdens fall, its discords cease,
 I lapse into the glad release 20
 Of Nature's own exceeding peace.

O welcome calm of heart and mind !
 As falls yon fir-tree's loosened rind
 To leave a tenderer growth behind,

So fall the weary years away ;
 A child again, my head I lay
 Upon the lap of this sweet day.

This western wind hath Lethean powers,
Yon noonday cloud nepenthe showers,
The lake is white with lotus-flowers ! 30

Even Duty's voice is faint and low,
And slumberous Conscience, waking slow,
Forgets her blotted scroll to show.

The Shadow which pursues us all,
Whose ever-nearing steps appall,
Whose voice we hear behind us call,—

That Shadow blends with mountain grey,
It speaks but what the light waves say,—
Death walks apart from Fear to-day !

Rocked on her breast, these pines and I 40
Alike on Nature's love rely ;
And equal seems to live or die.

Assured that He whose presence fills
With light the spaces of these hills
No evil to His creatures wills.

The simple faith remains, that He
Will do, whatever that may be,
The best alike for man and tree.

What mosses over one shall grow,
What light and life the other know, 50
Unanxious, leaving Him to show.

II. EVENING.

Yon mountain's side is black with night,
While, broad-orbed, o'er its gleaming crown
The moon, slow-rounding into sight,
On the hushed inland sea looks down.

How start to light the clustering isles,
Each silver-hemmed ! How sharply show
The shadows of their rocky piles,
And tree-tops in the wave below ! 59

How far and strange the mountains seem.
Dim-looming through the pale, still light !
The vague, vast grouping of a dream,
They stretch into the solemn night.

Beneath, lake, wood, and peopled vale,
Hushed by that presence grand and grave,
Are silent, save the cricket's wail,
And low response of leaf and wave.

Fair scenes ! whereto the Day and Night
Make rival love, I leave ye soon,
What time before the eastern light 70
The pale ghost of the setting moon

Shall hide behind yon rocky spines,
And the young archer, Morn, shall break
His arrows on the mountain pines,
And, golden-sandalled, walk the lake !

Farewell ! around this smiling bay
Gay-hearted Health, and Life in bloom,
With lighter steps than mine, may stray
In radiant summers yet to come.

But none shall more regretful leave 80
These waters and these hills than I :
Or, distant, fonder dream how e'er
Or dawn is painting wave and sky ;

How rising moons shine sad and mild
On wooded isle and silvering bay ;
Or setting suns beyond the piled
And purple mountains lead the day ;

Nor laughing girl, nor bearding boy,
 Nor full-pulsed manhood, lingering here,
 Shall add, to life's abounding joy,
 The charmed repose to suffering dear.

90

Still waits kind Nature to impart
 Her choicest gifts to such as gain
 An entrance to her loving heart
 Through the sharp discipline of pain.

Forever from the Hand that takes
 One blessing from us others fall;
 And, soon or late, our Father makes
 His perfect recompense to all!

Oh, watched by Silence and the Night,
 And folded in the strong embrace
 Of the great mountains, with the light
 Of the sweet heavens upon thy face,

100

Lake of the Northland ! keep thy dower
 Of beauty still, and while above
 Thy solemn mountains speak of power,
 Be thou the mirror of God's love.

1853.

THE FRUIT-GIFT

LAST night, just as the tints of autumn's sky
 Of sunset faded from our hills and streams,
 I sat, vague listening, lapped in twilight dreams,
 To the leaf's rustle, and the cricket's cry.
 Then, like that basket, flush with summer fruit,
 Dropped by the angels at the Prophet's foot,
 Came, unannounced, a gift of clustered sweetness,
 Full-orbed, and glowing with the prisoned beams

Of summery suns, and rounded to completeness
 By kisses of the south-wind and the dew. 10
 Thrilled with a glad surprise, methought I knew
 The pleasure of the homeward-turning Jew,
 When Eshcol's clusters on his shoulders lay,
 Dropping their sweetness on his desert way.

I said, "This fruit beseems no world of sin.
 Its parent vine, rooted in Paradise,
 O'ercrept the wall, and never paid the price
 Of the great mischief,—an ambrosial tree,
 Eden's exotic, somehow smuggled in,
 To keep the thorns and thistles company." 20
 Perchance our frail, sad mother plucked in haste
 A single vine-slip as she passed the gate,
 Where the dread sword alternate paled and burned,
 And the stern angel, pitying her fate,
 Forgave the lovely trespasser, and turned
 Aside his face of fire; and thus the waste
 And fallen world hath yet its annual taste
 Of primal good, to prove of sin the cost,
 And show by one gleaned ear the mighty harvest
 lost.

1854.

THE MAYFLOWERS

The trailing arbutus, or mayflower, grows abundantly in the vicinity of Plymouth, and was the first flower that greeted the Pilgrims after their fearful winter. The name *mayflower* was familiar in England, as the application of it to the historic vessel shows, but it was applied by the English, and still is, to the hawthorn. Its use in New England in connection with *Epigæa repens* dates from a very early day, some claiming that the first Pilgrims so used it, in affectionate memory of the vessel and its English flower association.

SAD Mayflower! watched by winter stars,
 And nursed by winter gales,
 With petals of the sleeted spars,
 And leaves of frozen sails!

What had she in those dreary hours,
Within her ice-rimmed bay,
In common with the wild-wood flowers,
The first sweet smiles of May ?

Yet, " God be praised !" the Pilgrim said,
Who saw the blossoms peer 10
Above the brown leaves, dry and dead,
" Behold our Mayflower here !"

" God wills it : here our rest shall be,
Our years of wandering o'er ;
For us the Mayflower of the sea
Shall spread her sails no more."

O sacred flowers of faith and hope,
As sweetly now as then ;
Ye bloom on many a birchen slope,
In many a pine-dark glen. 20

Behind the sea-wall's rugged length,
Unchanged, your leaves unfold.
Like love behind the manly strength
Of the brave hearts of old.

So live the fathers in their sons,
Their sturdy faith be ours.
And ours the love that overruns
Its rocky strength with flowers.

The Pilgrim's wild and wintry day
Its shadow round us draws ; 30
The Mayflower of his stormy bay,
Our Freedom's struggling cause.

But warmer suns ere long shall bring
To life the frozen sod ;
And through dead leaves of hope shall spring
Afresh the flowers of God !

THE LAST WALK IN AUTUMN

I.

O'ER the bare woods, whose outstretched hands
 Plead with the leaden heavens in vain,
 I see, beyond the valley lands,
 The sea's long level dim with rain.
 Around me all things, stark and dumb,
 Seem praying for the snows to come,
 And, for the summer bloom and greenness gone,
 With winter's sunset lights and dazzling morn atone.

II.

Along the river's summer walk,
 The withered tufts of asters nod; 10
 And trembles on its arid stalk
 The hoar plume of the golden-rod.
 And on a ground of sombre fir,
 And azure-studded juniper,
 The silver birch its buds of purple shows,
 And scarlet berries tell where bloomed the sweet wild-
 rose !

III.

With mingled sound of horns and bells,
 A far-heard clang, the wild geese fly,
 Storm-sent, from Arctic moors and fells,
 Like a great arrow through the sky, 20
 Two dusky lines converged in one,
 Chasing the southward-flying sun;
 While the brave snow-bird and the hardy jay
 Call to them from the pines, as if to bid them stay.

IV.

I passed this way a year ago :
 The wind blew south ; the noon of day
 Was warm as June's ; and save that snow
 Flecked the low mountains far away,

And that the vernal-seeming breeze
 Mocked faded grass and leafless trees, 30
 I might have dreamed of summer as I lay,
 Watching the fallen leaves with the soft wind at play.

V.

Since then, the winter blasts have piled
 The white pagodas of the snow
 On these rough slopes, and, strong and wild,
 Yon river, in its overflow
 Of spring-time rain and sun, set free,
 Crashed with its ices to the sea;
 And over these grey fields, then green and gold,
 The summer corn has waved, the thunder's organ
 rolled. 40

VI.

Rich gift of God ! A year of time !
 What pomp of rise and shut of day,
 What hues wherewith our Northern clime
 Makes autumn's dropping woodlands gay,
 What airs outblown from ferny dells,
 And clover-bloom and sweetbrier smells,
 What songs of brooks and birds, what fruits and
 flowers,
 Green woods and moonlit snows, have in its round
 been ours !

VII.

I know not how, in other lands,
 The changing seasons come and go ; 50
 What splendours fall on Syrian sands,
 What purple lights on Alpine snow !
 Nor how the pomp of sunrise waits
 On Venice at her watery gates ;
 A dream alone to me is Arno's vale,
 And the Alhambra's halls are but a traveller's
 tale.

VIII.

Yet, on life's current, he who drifts
Is one with him who rows or sails;
And he who wanders widest lifts
No more of beauty's jealous veils 60
Than he who from his doorway sees
The miracle of flowers and trees,
Feels the warm Orient in the noonday air,
And from cloud minarets hears the sunset call to prayer!

IX.

The eye may well be glad that looks
Where Pharpar's fountains rise and fall;
But he who sees his native brooks
Laugh in the sun, has seen them all.
The marble palaces of Ind
Rise round him in the snow and wind; 70
From his lone sweetbrier Persian Hafiz smiles,
And Rome's cathedral awe is in his woodland aisles.

X.

And thus it is my fancy blends
The near at hand and far and rare;
And while the same horizon bends
Above the silver-sprinkled hair
Which flashed the light of morning skies
On childhood's wonder-lifted eyes,
Within its round of sea and sky and field,
Earth wheels with all her zones, the Kosmos stands
revealed. 80

XI.

And thus the sick man on his bed,
The toiler to his task-work bound,
Behold their prison-walls outspread.
Their clipped horizon widen round!
While freedom-giving fancy waits,
Like Peter's angel at the gates,
The power is theirs to baffle care and pain,
To bring the lost world back, and make it theirs again!

XII.

What lack of goodly company,
 When masters of the ancient lyre
 Obey my call, and trace for me
 Their words of mingled tears and fire !
 I talk with Bacon, grave and wise,
 I read the world with Pascal's eyes ;
 And priest and sage, with solemn brows austere,
 And poets, garland-bound, the Lords of Thought, draw
 near.

XIII.

Methinks, O friend, I hear thee say,
 " In vain the human heart we mock ;
 Bring living guests who love the day.
 Not ghosts who fly at crow of cock !
 The herbs we share with flesh and blood
 Are better than ambrosial food
 With laurelled shades." I grant it, nothing loath,
 But doubly blest is he who can partake of both.

XIV.

He who might Plato's banquet grace,
 Have I not seen before me sit,
 And watched his puritanic face,
 With more than Eastern wisdom lit ?
 Shrewd mystic ! who, upon the back
 Of his Poor Richard's Almanac
 Writing the Sufi's song, the Gentoo's dream,
 Links Manu's age of thought to Fulton's age of steam !

XV.

Here too, of answering love secure,
 Have I not welcomed to my hearth
 The gentle pilgrim troubadour,
 Whose songs have girdled half the earth ;
 Whose pages, like the magic mat
 Whereon the Eastern lover sat,
 Have borne me over Rhine-land's purple vines,
 And Nubia's tawny sands, and Phrygia's mountain
 pines!

90

100

110

120

XVI.

And he, who to the lettered wealth
Of ages adds the lore unpriced,
The wisdom and the moral health,
The ethics of the school of Christ;
The statesman to his holy trust,
As the Athenian archon, just,
Struck down, exiled like him for truth alone,
Has he not graced my home with beauty all his own ?

XVII.

What greetings smile, what farewells wave,
What loved ones enter and depart ! 130
The good, the beautiful, the brave,
The Heaven-lent treasures of the heart !
How conscious seems the frozen sod
And beechen slope whereon they trod !
The oak-leaves rustle, and the dry grass bends
Beneath the shadowy feet of lost or absent friends.

XVIII.

Then ask not why to these bleak hills
I cling, as clings the tufted moss,
To bear the winter's lingering chills,
The mocking spring's perpetual loss. 140
I dream of lands where summer smiles,
And soft winds blow from spicy isles,
But scarce would Ceylon's breath of flowers be sweet,
Could I not feel thy soil, New England, at my feet !

XIX.

At times I long for gentler skies,
And bathe in dreams of softer air,
But homesick tears would fill the eyes
That saw the Cross without the Bear.
The pine must whisper to the palm,
The north-wind break the tropic calm ; 150
And with the dreamy languor of the Line,
The North's keen virtue blend, and strength to beauty
join.

XX.

Better to stem with heart and hand
 The roaring tide of life, than lie,
 Unmindful, on its flowery strand,
 Of God's occasions drifting by !
 Better with naked nerve to bear
 The needles of this goading air,
 Than, in the lap of sensual ease, forgo
 The godlike power to do, the godlike aim to know. 160

XXI.

Home of my heart ! to me more fair
 Than gay Versailles or Windsor's halls,
 The painted, shingly town-house where
 The freeman's vote for Freedom falls !
 The simple roof where prayer is made,
 Than Gothic groin and colonnade ;
 The living temple of the heart of man,
 Than Rome's sky-mocking vault, or many-spired Milan !

XXII.

More dear thy equal village schools,
 Where rich and poor the Bible read, 170
 Than classic halls where Priestcraft rules,
 And Learning wears the chains of Creed ;
 Thy glad Thanksgiving, gathering in
 The scattered sheaves of home and kin,
 Than the mad licence ushering Lenten pains,
 Or holidays of slaves who laugh and dance in chains.

XXIII.

And sweet homes nestle in these dales,
 And perch along these wooded swells ;
 And, blest beyond Arcadian vales,
 They hear the sound of Sabbath bells ! 180
 Here dwells no perfect man sublime,
 Nor woman winged before her time,
 But with the faults and follies of the race,
 Old home-bred virtues hold their not unhonoured place.

XXIV.

Here manhood struggles for the sake
Of mother, sister, daughter, wife.
The graces and the loves which make
The music of the march of life;
And woman, in her daily round
Of duty, walks on holy ground. 190
No unpaid menial tills the soil, nor here
Is the bad lesson learned at human rights to sneer.

XXV.

Then let the icy north-wind blow
The trumpets of the coming storm,
To arrowy sleet and blinding snow
Yon slanting lines of rain transform.
Young hearts shall hail the drifted cold,
As gaily as I did of old;
And I, who watch them through the frosty pane,
Unenvious, live in them my boyhood o'er again.

XXVI.

And I will trust that He who heeds 201
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads,
And stains these mosses green and gold,
Will still, as He hath done, incline
His gracious care to me and mine;
Grant what we ask aright, from wrong debar,
And, as the earth grows dark, make brighter every star !

XXVII.

I have not seen, I may not see,
My hopes for man take form in fact, 210
But God will give the victory
In due time: in that faith I act.
And he who sees the future sure,
The baffling present may endure.
And bless, meanwhile, the unseen Hand that leads
The heart's desires beyond the halting step of deeds.

XXVIII.

And thou, my song, I send thee forth.

Where harsher songs of mine have flown;
Go, find a place at home and hearth

Where'er thy singer's name is known: 220

Revive for him the kindly thought

Of friends; and they who love him not,

Touched by some strain of thine, perchance may take

The hand he proffers all, and thank him for thy sake

1857.

THE OLD BURYING-GROUND

Our vales are sweet with fern and rose,

Our hills are maple-crowned;

But not from them our fathers chose

The village burying-ground.

The dreariest spot in all the land

To Death they set apart;

With scanty grace from Nature's hand,

And none from that of Art.

A winding wall of mossy stone,

Frost-flung and broken, lines

10

A lonesome acre thinly grown

With grass and wandering vines.

Without the wall a birch-tree shows

Its drooped and tasselled head;

Within, a stag-horned sumach grows,

Fern-leaved, with spikes of red.

There, sheep that graze the neighbouring plain

Like white ghosts come and go,

The farm-horse drags his fetlock chain,

The cow-bell tinkles slow.

20

Low moans the river from its bed,
The distant pines reply;
Like mourners shrinking from the dead,
They stand apart and sigh.

Unshaded smites the summer sun,
Unchecked the winter blast;
The school-girl learns the place to shun,
With glances backward cast.

For thus our fathers testified,
That he might read who ran,
The emptiness of human pride,
The nothingness of man. 30

They dared not plant the grave with flowers,
Nor dress the funeral sod,
Where, with a love as deep as ours,
They left their dead with God.

The hard and thorny path they kept
From beauty turned aside;
Nor missed they over those who slept
The grace to life denied. 40

Yet still the wilding flowers would blow,
The golden leaves would fall,
The seasons come, the seasons go,
And God be good to all.

Above the graves the blackberry hung
In bloom and green its wreath,
And harebells swung as if they rung
The chimes of peace beneath.

The beauty Nature loves to share,
The gifts she hath for all,
The common light, the common air,
O'ercrept the graveyard's wall. 50

It knew the glow of eventide,
The sunrise and the noon,
And glorified and sanctified
It slept beneath the moon.

With flowers or snow-flakes for its sod,
Around the seasons ran,
And evermore the love of God
Rebuked the fear of man.

60

We dwell with fears on either hand
Within a daily strife,
And spectral problems waiting stand
Before the gates of life.

The doubts we vainly seek to solve,
The truths we know, are one;
The known and nameless stars revolve
Around the Central Sun.

And if we reap as we have sown,
And take the dole we deal,
The law of pain is love alone,
The wounding is to heal.

70

Unharm'd from change to change we glide,
We fall as in our dreams;
The far-off terror at our side
A smiling angel seems.

Secure on God's all-tender heart
Alike rest great and small;
Why fear to lose our little part,
When He is pledged for all?

80

O fearful heart and troubled brain!
Take hope and strength from this,—
That Nature never hints in vain,
Nor prophecies amiss.

Her wild birds sing the same sweet stave,
Her lights and airs are given
Alike to playground and the grave;
And over both is Heaven.

1858.

THE RIVER PATH

No bird-song floated down the hill,
The tangled bank below was still;

No rustle from the birchen stem,
No ripple from the water's hem.

The dusk of twilight round us grew.
We felt the falling of the dew;

For, from us, ere the day was done.
The wooded hills shut out the sun.

But on the river's farther side
We saw the hill-tops glorified,— 10

A tender glow, exceeding fair.
A dream of day without its glare.

With us the damp, the chill, the gloom:
With them the sunset's rosy bloom;

While dark, through willowy vistas seen,
The river rolled in shade between.

From out the darkness where we trod,
We gazed upon those hills of God,

Whose light seemed not of moon or sun.
We spake not, but our thought was one. 20

We paused, as if from that bright shore
Beckoned our dear ones gone before;

And stilled our beating hearts to hear
The voices lost to mortal ear !

Sudden our pathway turned from night ;
The hills swung open to the light ;

Through their green gates the sunshine showed,
A long, slant splendour downward flowed.

Down glade and glen and bank it rolled ;
It bridged the shaded stream with gold ; 30

And, borne on piers of mist, allied
The shadowy with the sunlit side !

“ So,” prayed we, “ when our feet draw near
The river dark, with mortal fear,

“ And the night cometh chill with dew,
O Father ! let Thy light break through !

“ So let the hills of doubt divide,
So bridge with faith the sunless tide !

“ So let the eyes that fail on earth
On Thy eternal hills look forth ; 40

“ And in Thy beckoning angels know
The dear ones whom we loved below !”

1860.

THE VANISHERS

SWEETEST of all childlike dreams
In the simple Indian lore
Still to me the legend seems
Of the shapes who flit before.

Flitting, passing, seen and gone,
Never reached nor found at rest,
Baffling search, but beckoning on
To the Sunset of the Blest.

From the clefts of mountain rocks,
Through the dark of lowland firs, 10
Flash the eyes and flow the locks
Of the mystic Vanishers !

And the fisher in his skiff,
And the hunter on the moss,
Hear their call from cape and cliff.
See their hands the birch-leaves toss.

Wistful, longing, through the green
Twilight of the clustered pines,
In their faces rarely seen
Beauty more than mortal shines. 20

Fringed with gold their mantles flow
On the slopes of westering knolls;
In the wind they whisper low
Of the Sunset Land of Souls.

Doubt who may, O friend of mine !
Thou and I have seen them too ;
On before with beck and sign
Still they glide, and we pursue.

More than clouds of purple trail
In the gold of setting day ; 30
More than gleams of wing or sail
Beckon from the sea-mist grey.

Glimpses of immortal youth,
Gleams and glories seen and flown,
Far-heard voices sweet with truth,
Airs from viewless Eden blown ;

Beauty that eludes our grasp,
 Sweetness that transcends our taste,
 Loving hands we may not clasp,
 Shining feet that mock our haste; 40

Gentle eyes we closed below,
 Tender voices heard once more,
 Smile and call us, as they go
 On and onward, still before.

Guided thus, O friend of mine !
 Let us walk our little way,
 Knowing by each beckoning sign
 That we are not quite astray.

Chase we still, with baffled feet,
 Smiling eye and waving hand, 50
 Sought and seeker soon shall meet,
 Lost and found, in Sunset Land !

1864.

THE PAGEANT

A SOUND as if from bells of silver,
 Or elfin cymbals smitten clear,
 Through the frost-pictured panes I hear.

A brightness which outshines the morning,
 A splendour brooking no delay,
 Beckons and tempts my feet away.

I leave the trodden village highway
 For virgin snow-paths glimmering through
 A jewelled elm-tree avenue;

Where, keen against the walls of sapphire, 10
 The gleaming tree-bolls, ice-embossed,
 Hold up their chandeliers of frost.

I tread in Orient halls enchanted,
I dream the Saga's dream of caves
Gem-lit beneath the North Sea waves !

I walk the land of Eldorado,
I touch its mimic garden bowers,
Its silver leaves and diamond flowers !

The flora of the mystic mine-world
Around me lifts on crystal stems
The petals of its clustered gems ! 20

What miracle of weird transforming
In this wild work of frost and light,
This glimpse of glory infinite !

This foregleam of the Holy City
Like that to him of Patmos given,
The white bride coming down from heaven !

How flash the ranked and mail-clad alders,
Through what sharp-glancing spears of reeds
The brook its muffled water leads ! 30

Yon maple, like the bush of Horeb,
Burns unconsumed : a white, cold fire
Rays out from every grassy spire.

Each slender rush and spike of mullein,
Low laurel shrub and drooping fern,
Transfigured, blaze where'er I turn.

How yonder Ethiopian hemlock
Crowned with his glistening circlet stands !
What jewels light his swarthy hands !

Here, where the forest opens southward, 40
Between its hospitable pines,
As through a door, the warm sun shines.

The jewels loosen on the branches,
And lightly, as the soft winds blow,
Fall, tinkling, on the ice below.

And through the clashing of their cymbals
I hear the old familiar fall
Of water down the rocky wall,

Where, from its wintry prison breaking,
In dark and silence hidden long,
The brook repeats its summer song.

50

One instant flashing in the sunshine,
Keen as a sabre from its sheath,
Then lost again the ice beneath.

I hear the rabbit lightly leaping,
The foolish screaming of the jay,
The chopper's axe-stroke far away;

The clamour of some neighbouring barn-yard,
The lazy cock's belated crow,
Or cattle-tramp in crispy snow.

60

And, as in some enchanted forest
The lost knight hears his comrades sing,
And, near at hand, their bridles ring,—

So welcome I these sounds and voices,
These airs from far-off summer blown,
This life that leaves me not alone.

For the white glory overawes me;
The crystal terror of the seer
Of Chebar's vision blinds me here.

Rebuke me not, O sapphire heaven!
Thou stainless earth, lay not on me
Thy keen reproach of purity,

70

If, in this august presence-chamber,
I sigh for summer's leaf-green gloom
And warm airs thick with odorous bloom !

Let the strange frost-work sink and crumble,
And let the loosened tree-boughs swing,
Till all their bells of silver ring.

Shine warmly down, thou sun of noontime,
On this chill pageant, melt and move 80
The winter's frozen heart with love.

And, soft and low, thou wind south-blowing,
Breathe through a veil of tenderest haze
Thy prophecy of summer days.

Come with thy green relief of promise,
And to this dead, cold splendour bring
The living jewels of the spring !

1869.

A MYSTERY

THE river hemmed with leaning trees
Wound through its meadows green ;
A low, blue line of mountains showed
The open pines between.

One sharp, tall peak above them all
Clear into sunlight sprang :
I saw the river of my dreams,
The mountains that I sang !

No clue of memory led me on,
But well the ways I knew ; 10
A feeling of familiar things
With every footstep grew.

Not otherwise above its crag
 Could lean the blasted pine;
Not otherwise the maple hold
 Aloft its red ensign.

So up the long and shorn foot-hills
 The mountain road should creep;
So, green and low, the meadow fold
 Its red-haired kine asleep.

20

The river wound as it should wind;
 Their place the mountains took:
The white torn fringes of their clouds
 Wore no unwonted look.

Yet ne'er before that river's rim
 Was pressed by feet of mine,
Never before mine eyes had crossed
 That broken mountain line.

A presence, strange at once and known,
 Walked with me as my guide;
The skirts of some forgotten life
 Trailed noiseless at my side.

30

Was it a dim-remembered dream?
 Or glimpse through æons old?
The secret which the mountains kept
 The river never told.

But from the vision ere it passed
 A tender hope I drew,
And, pleasant as a dawn of spring,
 The thought within me grew,

40

That love would temper every change,
 And soften all surprise,
And, misty with the dreams of earth,
 The hills of Heaven arise.

A SEA DREAM

WE saw the slow tides go and come,
 The curving surf-lines lightly drawn,
 The grey rocks touched with tender bloom
 Beneath the fresh-blown rose of dawn.

WE saw in richer sunsets lost
 The sombre pomp of showery noons;
 And signalled spectral sails that crossed
 The weird, low light of rising moons.

On stormy eves from cliff and head
 We saw the white spray tossed and spurned;
 While over all, in gold and red, 11
 Its face of fire the lighthouse turned.

The rail-car brought its daily crowds,
 Half curious, half indifferent,
 Like passing sails or floating clouds,
 We saw them as they came and went.

But, one calm morning, as we lay
 And watched the mirage-lifted wall
 Of coast, across the dreamy bay,
 And heard afar the curlew call, 20

And nearer voices, wild or tame,
 Of airy flock and childish throng,
 Up from the water's edge there came
 Faint snatches of familiar song.

Careless we heard the singer's choice
 Of old and common airs; at last
 The tender pathos of his voice
 In one low chanson held us fast.

A song that mingled joy and pain,
And memories old and sadly sweet; 30
While, timing to its minor strain,
The waves in lapsing cadence beat.

The waves are glad in breeze and sun;
The rocks are fringed with foam;
I walk once more a haunted shore,
A stranger, yet at home,
A land of dreams I roam.

Is this the wind, the soft sea-wind
That stirred thy locks of brown?
Are these the rocks whose mosses knew 40
The trail of thy light gown,
Where boy and girl sat down?

I see the grey fort's broken wall,
The boats that rock below;
And, out at sea, the passing sails
We saw so long ago
Rose-red in morning's glow.

The freshness of the early time
On every breeze is blown;
As glad the sea, as blue the sky,— 50
The change is ours alone;
The saddest is my own.

A stranger now, a world-worn man,
Is he who bears my name;
But thou, methinks, whose mortal life
Immortal youth became,
Art evermore the same.

Thou art not here, thou art not there,
Thy place I cannot see;
I only know that where thou art 60
The blessed angels be,
And heaven is glad for thee.

Forgive me if the evil years
Have left on me their sign;
Wash out, O soul so beautiful,
The many stains of mine
In tears of love divine !

I could not look on thee and live,
If thou wert by my side;
The vision of a shining one,
The white and heavenly bride,
Is well to me denied.

70

But turn to me thy dear girl-face
Without the angel's crown,
The wedded roses of thy lips,
Thy loose hair rippling down
In waves of golden brown.

Look forth once more through space and time.
And let thy sweet shade fall
In tenderest grace of soul and form
On memory's frescoed wall,
A shadow, and yet all !

80

Draw near, more near, for ever dear !
Where'er I rest or roam,
Or in the city's crowded streets,
Or by the blown sea foam,
The thought of thee is home !

At breakfast hour the singer read
The city news, with comment wise,
Like one who felt the pulse of trade
Beneath his finger fall and rise.

90

His look, his air, his curt speech, told
The man of action, not of books,
To whom the corners made in gold
And stocks were more than seaside nooks.

Of life beneath the life confessed
 His song had hinted unawares;
 Of flowers in traffic's ledgers pressed,
 Of human hearts in bulls and bears.

But eyes in vain were turned to watch 100
 That face so hard and shrewd and strong;
 And ears in vain grew sharp to catch
 The meaning of that morning song.

In vain some sweet-voiced querist sought
 To sound him, leaving as she came;
 Her baited album only caught
 A common, unromantic name.

No word betrayed the mystery fine,
 That trembled on the singer's tongue;
 He came and went, and left no sign 110
 Behind him save the song he sung.

1874.

HAZEL BLOSSOMS

THE summer warmth has left the sky,
 The summer songs have died away;
 And, withered, in the footpaths lie
 The fallen leaves, but yesterday
 With ruby and with topaz gay.

The grass is browning on the hills;
 No pale, belated flowers recall
 The astral fringes of the rills,
 And drearily the dead vines fall,
 Frost-blackened, from the roadside wall. 10

Yet through the grey and sombre wood,
 Against the dusk of fir and pine,
 Last of their floral sisterhood,
 The hazel's yellow blossoms shine
 The tawny gold of Afric's mine!

Small beauty hath my unsung flower,
For spring to own or summer hail;
But, in the season's saddest hour,
To skies that weep and winds that wail
Its glad surprisals never fail. 20

O days grown cold ! O life grown old !
No rose of June may bloom again ;
But, like the hazel's twisted gold,
Through early frost and latter rain
Shall hints of summer-time remain.

And as within the hazel's bough
A gift of mystic virtue dwells,
That points to golden ores below,
And in dry desert places tells 29
Where flow unseen the cool, sweet wells,—

So, in the wise Diviner's hand,
Be mine the hazel's grateful part
To feel, beneath a thirsty land,
The living waters thrill and start,
The beating of the rivulet's heart !

Sufficeth me the gift to light
With latest bloom the dark, cold days ;
To call some hidden spring to sight
That, in these dry and dusty ways,
Shall sing its pleasant song of praise. 40

O Love ! the hazel-wand may fail,
But thou canst lend the surer spell,
That, passing over Baca's vale,
Repeats the old-time miracle,
And makes the desert-land a well.

1874.

SUNSET ON THE BEARCAMP

A gold fringe on the purpling hem
 Of hills the river runs,
 As down its long, green valley falls
 The last of summer's suns.
 Along its tawny gravel-bed
 Broad-flowing, swift, and still,
 As if its meadow levels felt
 The hurry of the hill,
 Noiseless between its banks of green
 From curve to curve it slips;
 The drowsy maple-shadows rest
 Like fingers on its lips.

10

A waif from Carroll's wildest hills,
 Unstoried and unknown;
 The ursine legend of its name
 Prowls on its banks alone.
 Yet flowers as fair its slopes adorn
 As ever Yarrow knew,
 Or, under rainy Irish skies,
 By Spenser's Mulla grew;
 And through the gaps of leaning trees
 Its mountain cradle shows:
 The gold against the amethyst,
 The green against the rose.

20

Touched by a light that hath no name,
 A glory never sung,
 Aloft on sky and mountain wall
 Are God's great pictures hung.
 How changed the summits vast and old!
 No longer granite-browed,
 They melt in rosy mist; the rock
 Is softer than the cloud;
 The valley holds its breath; no leaf
 Of all its elms is twirled:
 The silence of eternity
 Seems falling on the world.

30

The pause before the breaking seals
Of mystery is this ;
Yon miracle-play of night and day
Makes dumb its witnesses. 40
What unseen altar crowns the hills
That reach up stair on stair ?
What eyes look through, what white wings fan
These purple veils of air ?
What Presence from the heavenly heights
To those of earth stoops down ?
Not vainly Hellas dreamed of gods
On Ida's snowy crown !

Slow fades the vision of the sky.
The golden water pales, 50
And over all the valley-land
A grey-winged vapour sails.
I go the common way of all ;
The sunset fires will burn,
The flowers will blow, the river flow,
When I no more return.
No whisper from the mountain pine
Nor lapsing stream shall tell
The stranger, treading where I tread,
Of him who loved them well. 60

But beauty seen is never lost,
God's colours all are fast ;
The glory of this sunset heaven
Into my soul has passed.
A sense of gladness unconfined
To mortal date or clime ;
As the soul liveth, it shall live
Beyond the years of time.
Beside the mystic asphodels
Shall bloom the home-born flowers, 70
And new horizons flush and glow
With sunset hues of ours.

Farewell ! these smiling hills must wear
 Too soon their wintry frown,
 And snow-cold winds from off them shake
 The maple's red leaves down.
 But I shall see a summer sun
 Still setting broad and low ;
 The mountain slopes shall blush and bloom,
 The golden water flow.
 A lover's claim is mine on all
 I see to have and hold, —
 The rose-light of perpetual hills,
 And sunsets never cold !

So

1876.

THE TRAILING ARBUTUS

I WANDERED lonely where the pine-trees made
 Against the bitter East their barricade,
 And, guided by its sweet
 Perfume, I found, within a narrow dell,
 The trailing spring flower tinted like a shell
 Amid dry leaves and mosses at my feet.

From under dead boughs, for whose loss the pines
 Moaned ceaseless overhead, the blossoming vines
 Lifted their glad surprise.

While yet the bluebird smoothed in leafless trees
 His feathers ruffled by the chill sea-breeze,
 And snow-drifts lingered under April skies.

10

As, pausing, o'er the lonely flower I bent,
 I thought of lives thus lowly, clogged and pent,
 Which yet find room,
 Through care and cumber, coldness and decay,
 To lend a sweetness to the ungenial day.
 And make the sad earth happier for their bloom.

1879.

ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER

This name in some parts of Europe is given to the season we call Indian Summer, in honour of the good St. Martin. The title of the poem was suggested by the fact that the day it refers to was the exact date of that set apart to the Saint, the 11th of November.

THOUGH flowers have perished at the touch
Of Frost, the early comer,
I hail the season loved so much,
The good St. Martin's summer.

O gracious morn, with rose-red dawn,
And thin moon curving o'er it !
The old year's darling, latest born,
More loved than all before it !

How flamed the sunrise through the pines !
How stretched the birchen shadows, 10
Braiding in long, wind-wavered lines
The westward sloping meadows !

The sweet day, opening as a flower
Unfolds its petals tender,
Renews for us at noontide's hour
The summer's tempered splendour.

The birds are hushed ; alone the wind,
That through the woodland searches,
The red oak's lingering leaves can find,
And yellow plumes of larches. 20

But still the balsam-breathing pine
Invites no thought of sorrow,
No hint of loss from air like wine
The earth's content can borrow.

The summer and the winter here
Midway a truce are holding.
A soft, consenting atmosphere
Their tents of peace enfolding.

The silent woods, the lonely hills,
Rise solemn in their gladness;
The quiet that the valley fills
Is scarcely joy or sadness. 30

How strange ! The autumn yesterday
In winter's grasp seemed dying;
On whirling winds from skies of grey
The early snow was flying.

And now, while over Nature's mood
There steals a soft relenting,
I will not mar the present good,
Forecasting or lamenting. 40

My autumn time and Nature's hold
A dreamy tryst together,
And, both grown old, about us fold
The golden-tissued weather.

I lean my heart against the day
To feel its bland caressing;
I will not let it pass away
Before it leaves its blessing.

God's angels come not as of old
The Syrian shepherds knew them;
In reddening dawns, in sunset gold,
And warm noon lights I view them. 50

Nor need there is, in times like this
When heaven to earth draws nearer,
Of wing or song as witnesses
To make their presence clearer.

O stream of life, whose swifter flow
Is of the end forewarning,
Methinks thy sundown afterglow
Seems less of night than morning ! 60

Old cares grow light; aside I lay
The doubts and fears that troubled;
The quiet of the happy day
Within my soul is doubled.

That clouds must veil this fair sunshine
Not less a joy I find it;
Nor less yon warm horizon line
That winter lurks behind it.

The mystery of the untried days
I close my eyes from reading;
His will be done whose darkest ways
To light and life are leading !

70

Less drear the winter night shall be,
If memory cheer and hearten
Its heavy hours with thoughts of thee,
Sweet summer of St. Martin !

1880.

SWEET FERN

THE subtle power in perfume found
Nor priest nor sibyl vainly learned;
On Grecian shrine or Aztec mound
No censer idly burned.

That power the old-time worships knew,
The Corybantes' frenzied dance,
The Pythian priestess swooning through
The wonderland of trance.

And Nature holds, in wood and field,
Her thousand sunlit censers still;
To spells of flower and shrub we yield
Against or with our will.

10

I climbed a hill-path strange and new
With slow feet, pausing at each turn;
A sudden waft of west wind blew
The breath of the sweet fern.

That fragrance from my vision swept
The alien landscape; in its stead,
Up fairer hills of youth I stepped.
As light of heart as tread.

20

I saw my boyhood's lakelet shine
Once more through rifts of woodland shade;
I knew my river's winding line
By morning mist betrayed.

With me June's freshness, lapsing brook,
Murmurs of leaf and bee, the call
Of birds, and one in voice and look
In keeping with them all.

A fern beside the way we went
She plucked, and, smiling, held it up,
While from her hand the wild, sweet scent
I drank as from a cup.

30

O potent witchery of smell !
The dust-dry leaves to life return,
And she who plucked them owns the spell
And lifts her ghostly fern.

Or sense or spirit ? Who shall say
What touch the chord of memory thrills ?
It passed, and left the August day
Ablaze on lonely hills.

40

A DAY

TALK not of sad November, when a day
 Of warm, glad sunshine fills the sky of noon,
 And a wind, borrowed from some morn of June,
 Stirs the brown grasses and the leafless spray.

On the unfrosted pool the pillared pines
 Lay their long shafts of shadow: the small rill,
 Singing a pleasant song of summer still,
 A line of silver, down the hill-slope shines.

Hushed the bird-voices and the hum of bees,
 In the thin grass the crickets pipe no more; 10
 But still the squirrel hoards his winter store,
 And drops his nut-shells from the shag-bark trees.

Softly the dark green hemlocks whisper: high
 Above, the spires of yellowing larches show,
 Where the woodpecker and home-loving crow
 And jay and nut-hatch winter's threat defy.

O gracious beauty, ever new and old !
 O sights and sound of nature, doubly dear
 When the low sunshine warns the closing year
 Of snow-blown fields and waves of Arctic cold ! 20

Close to my heart I fold each lovely thing
 The sweet day yields; and, not disconsolate,
 With the calm patience of the woods I wait
 For leaf and blossom when God gives us Spring !

29th, 11th mo., 1886.

PERSONAL POEMS

TO ———

WITH A COPY OF WOOLMAN'S JOURNAL.

"Get the writings of John Woolman by heart."—*Essays of Elia*.

MAIDEN ! with the fair brown tresses
Shading o'er thy dreamy eye,
Floating on thy thoughtful forehead
Cloud wreaths of its sky.

Youthful years and maiden beauty,
Joy with them should still abide,—
Instinct take the place of Duty,
Love, not Reason, guide,

Ever in the New rejoicing,
Kindly beckoning back the Old, 10
Turning, with the gift of Midas,
All things into gold,

And the passing shades of sadness
Wearing even a welcome guise,
As, when some bright lake lies open
To the sunny skies,

Every wing of bird above it,
Every light cloud floating on,
Glitters like that flashing mirror
In the self-same sun. 20

But upon thy youthful forehead
Something like a shadow lies;
And a serious soul is looking
From thy earnest eyes.

With an early introversion,
Through the forms of outward things,
Seeking for the subtle essence,
And the hidden springs,

Deeper than the gilded surface
Hath thy wakeful vision seen, 30
Farther than the narrow present
Have thy journeyings been.

Thou hast midst Life's empty noises
Heard the solemn steps of Time,
And the low mysterious voices
Of another clime.

All the mystery of Being
Hath upon thy spirit pressed,—
Thoughts which, like the Deluge wanderer,
Find no place of rest: 40

That which mystic Plato pondered,
That which Zeno heard with awe,
And the star-rapt Zoroaster
In his night-watch saw.

From the doubt and darkness springing
Of the dim, uncertain Past,
Moving to the dark still shadows
O'er the Future cast.

Early hath Life's mighty question
Thrilled within thy heart of youth, 50
With a deep and strong beseeching:
What and where is Truth?

Hollow creed and ceremonial,
Whence the ancient life hath fled,
Idle faith unknown to action,
Dull and cold and dead,

Oracles, whose wire-worked meanings
Only wake a quiet scorn,—
Not from these thy seeking spirit
Hath its answer drawn.

60

But, like some tired child at even,
On thy mother Nature's breast,
Thou, methinks, art vainly seeking
Truth, and peace, and rest.

O'er that mother's rugged features
Thou art throwing Fancy's veil,
Light and soft as woven moonbeams,
Beautiful and frail !

O'er the rough chart of Existence,
Rocks of sin and wastes of woe, 70
Soft airs breathe, and green leaves tremble,
And cool fountains flow.

And to thee an answer cometh
From the earth and from the sky,
And to thee the hills and waters
And the stars reply.

But a soul-sufficing answer
Hath no outward origin ;
More than Nature's many voices
May be heard within.

80

Even as the great Augustine
Questioned earth and sea and sky,
And the dusty tomes of learning
And old poesy.

But his earnest spirit needed
More than outward Nature taught ;
More than blest the poet's vision
Or the sage's thought.

Only in the gathered silence
Of a calm and waiting frame,
Light and wisdom as from Heaven
To the seeker came. 90

Not to ease and aimless quiet
Doth that inward answer tend,
But to works of love and duty
As our being's end;

Not to idle dreams and trances,
Length of face, and solemn tone,
But to Faith, in daily striving
And performance shown. 100

Earnest toil and strong endeavour
Of a spirit which within
Wrestles with familiar evil
And besetting sin;

And without, with tireless vigour,
Steady heart, and weapon strong,
In the power of truth assailing
Every form of wrong.

Guided thus, how passing lovely
Is the track of Woolman's feet !
And his brief and simple record
How serenely sweet ! 110

O'er life's humblest duties throwing
Light the earthling never knew,
Freshening all its dark waste places
As with Hermon's dew.

All which glows in Pascal's pages,
All which sainted Guion sought,
Or the blue-eyed German Rahel
Half-unconscious taught : 120

Beauty, such as Goethe pictured,
 Such as Shelley dreamed of, shed
 Living warmth and starry brightness
 Round that poor man's head.

Not a vain and cold ideal,
 Not a poet's dream alone,
 But a presence warm and real,
 Seen and felt and known.

When the red right-hand of slaughter
 Moulders with the steel it swung, 130
 When the name of seer and poet
 Dies on Memory's tongue,

All bright thoughts and pure shall gather
 Round that meek and suffering one,—
 Glorious, like the seer-seen angel
 Standing in the sun !

Take the good man's book and ponder
 What its pages say to thee;
 Blessed as the hand of healing
 May its lesson be. 140

If it only serves to strengthen
 Yearnings for a higher good,
 For the fount of living waters
 And diviner food;

If the pride of human reason
 Feels its meek and still rebuke,
 Quailing like the eye of Peter
 From the Just One's look !

If with readier ear thou heedest
 What the Inward Teacher saith, 150
 Listening with a willing spirit
 And a childlike faith,—

Thou mayst live to bless the giver,
 Who, himself but frail and weak,
 Would at least the highest welfare
 Of another seek;

And his gift, though poor and lowly
 It may seem to other eyes,
 Yet may prove an angel holy
 In a pilgrim's guise.

160

1840.

FOLLEN

ON READING HIS ESSAY ON THE "FUTURE STATE."

Charles Follen, one of the noblest contributions of Germany to American citizenship, was at an early age driven from his professorship in the University of Jena, and compelled to seek shelter from official prosecution in Switzerland, on account of his liberal political opinions. He became Professor of Civil Law in the University of Basle. The governments of Prussia, Austria, and Russia united in demanding his delivery as a political offender; and, in consequence, he left Switzerland, and came to the United States. At the time of the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society he was a Professor in Harvard University, honoured for his genius, learning, and estimable character. His love of liberty and hatred of oppression led him to seek an interview with Garrison and express his sympathy with him. Soon after, he attended a meeting of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. An able speech was made by Rev. A. A. Phelps, and a letter of mine addressed to the Secretary of the Society was read. Whereupon he rose and stated that his views were in unison with those of the Society, and that after hearing the speech and the letter, he was ready to join it, and abide the probable consequences of such an unpopular act. He lost by so doing his professorship. He was an able member of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He perished in the ill-fated steamer Lexington, which was burned on its passage from New York, January 13, 1840. The few writings left behind him show him to have been a profound thinker of rare spiritual insight.

FRIEND of my soul ! as with moist eye
 I look up from this page of thine,
 Is it a dream that thou art nigh,
 Thy mild face gazing into mine ?

That presence seems before me now,
A placid heaven of sweet moonrise,
When, dew-like, on the earth below
Descends the quiet of the skies,

The calm brow through the parted hair,
The gentle lips which knew no guile,
Softening the blue eye's thoughtful care
With the bland beauty of their smile.

10

Ah me ! at times that last dread scene
Of Frost and Fire and moaning Sea
Will cast its shade of doubt between
The failing eyes of Faith and thee.

Yet, lingering o'er thy charmed page,
Where through the twilight air of earth,
Alike enthusiast and sage,
Prophet and bard, thou gazest forth,

20

Lifting the Future's solemn veil;
The reaching of a mortal hand
To put aside the cold and pale
Cloud-curtains of the Unseen Land;

In thoughts which answer to my own,
In words which reach my inward ear,
Like whispers from the void Unknown,
I feel thy living presence here.

The waves which lull thy body's rest,
The dust thy pilgrim footsteps trod,
Unwasted, through each change, attest
The fixed economy of God.

30

Shall these poor elements outlive
The mind whose kingly will they wrought ?
Their gross unconsciousness survive
Thy godlike energy of thought ?

Thou livest, Follen ! not in vain
Hath thy fine spirit meekly borne
The burthen of Life's cross of pain,
And the thorned crown of suffering worn. 40

Oh, while Life's solemn mystery glooms
Around us like a dungeon's wall,
Silent earth's pale and crowded tombs,
Silent the heaven which bends o'er all !

While day by day our loved ones glide
In spectral silence, hushed and lone,
To the cold shadows which divide
The living from the dread Unknown ;

While even on the closing eye,
And on the lip which moves in vain, 50
The seals of that stern mystery
Their undiscovered trust retain ;

And only midst the gloom of death,
Its mournful doubts and haunting fears,
Two pale, sweet angels, Hope and Faith,
Smile dimly on us through their tears ;

'Tis something to a heart like mine
To think of thee as living yet ;
To feel that such a light as thine
Could not in utter darkness set. 60

Less dreary seems the untried way
Since thou hast left thy footprints there,
And beams of mournful beauty play
Round the sad Angel's sable hair.

Oh ! at this hour when half the sky
Is glorious with its evening light,
And fair broad fields of summer lie
Hung o'er with greenness in my sight ;

While through these elm-boughs wet with rain
The sunset's golden walls are seen, 70
With clover-bloom and yellow grain
And wood-draped hill and stream between;

I long to know if scenes like this
Are hidden from an angel's eyes;
If earth's familiar loveliness
Haunts not thy heaven's serener skies.

For sweetly here upon thee grew
The lesson which that beauty gave,
The ideal of the pure and true
In earth and sky and gliding wave. 80

And it may be that all which lends
The soul an upward impulse here,
With a diviner beauty blends,
And greets us in a holier sphere.

Through groves where blighting never fell
The humbler flowers of earth may twine;
And simple draughts from childhood's well
Blend with the angel-tasted wine.

But be the prying vision veiled,
And let the seeking lips be dumb, 90
Where even seraph eyes have failed
Shall mortal blindness seek to come?

We only know that thou hast gone,
And that the same returnless tide
Which bore thee from us still glides on,
And we who mourn thee with it glide.

On all thou lookest we shall look,
And to our gaze ere long shall turn
That page of God's mysterious book
We so much wish, yet dread to learn. 100

With Him, before whose awful power
 Thy spirit bent its trembling knee;
 Who, in the silent greeting flower,
 And forest leaf, looked out on thee,

We leave thee, with a trust serene,
 Which Time, nor Change, nor Death can move,
 While with thy childlike faith we lean
 On Him whose dearest name is Love!

1842.

TO RONGE

This was written after reading the powerful and manly protest of Johannes Ronge against the "pious fraud" of the Bishop of Treves. The bold movement of the young Catholic priest of Prussian Silesia seemed to me full of promise to the cause of political as well as religious liberty in Europe. That it failed was due partly to the faults of the reformer, but mainly to the disagreement of the Liberals of Germany upon a matter of dogma, which prevented them from unity of action. Ronge was born in Silesia in 1813 and died in October, 1887. His autobiography was translated into English and published in London in 1846.

STRIKE home, strong-hearted man! Down to the root
 Of old oppression sink the Saxon steel.
 Thy work is to hew down. In God's name then
 Put nerve into thy task. Let other men
 Plant, as they may, that better tree whose fruit
 The wounded bosom of the Church shall heal.
 Be thou the image-breaker. Let thy blows
 Fall heavy as the Suabian's iron hand,
 On crown or crosier, which shall interpose
 Between thee and the weal of Fatherland.
 Leave creeds to closet idlers. First of all,
 Shake thou all German dream-land with the fall
 Of that accursed tree, whose evil trunk
 Was spared of old by Erfurt's stalwart monk.
 Fight not with ghosts and shadows. Let us hear
 The snap of chain-links. Let our gladdened ear
 Catch the pale prisoner's welcome, as the light
 Follows thy axe-stroke, through his cell of night.

Be faithful to both worlds; nor think to feed
 Earth's starving millions with the husks of creed.
 Servant of Him whose mission high and holy 21
 Was to the wronged, the sorrowing, and the lowly,
 Thrust not His Eden promise from our sphere,
 Distant and dim beyond the blue sky's span;
 Like him of Patmos, see it, now and here,
 The New Jerusalem comes down to man!
 Be warned by Luther's error. Nor like him,
 When the roused Teuton dashes from his limb
 The rusted chain of ages, help to bind
 His hands for whom thou claim'st the freedom of
 the mind! 30

1846.

CHANNING

Not vainly did old poets tell,
 Nor vainly did old genius paint
 God's great and crowning miracle,
 The hero and the saint!

For even in a faithless day
 Can we our sainted ones discern;
 And feel, while with them on the way,
 Our hearts within us burn.

And thus the common tongue and pen
 Which, world-wide, echo Channing's fame,
 As one of Heaven's anointed men, 11
 Have sanctified his name.

In vain shall Rome her portals bar,
 And shut from him her saintly prize,
 Whom, in the world's great calendar,
 All men shall canonize.

By Narragansett's sunny bay,
 Beneath his green embowering wood,
 To me it seems but yesterday
 Since at his side I stood. 20

The slopes lay green with summer rains,
The western wind blew fresh and free,
And glimmered down the orchard lanes
The white surf of the sea.

With us was one, who, calm and true,
Life's highest purpose understood,
And, like his blessed Master, knew
The joy of doing good.

Unlearned, unknown to lettered fame,
Yet on the lips of England's poor
And toiling millions dwelt his name,
With blessings evermore.

30

Unknown to power or place, yet where
The sun looks o'er the Carib sea,
It blended with the freeman's prayer
And song of jubilee.

He told of England's sin and wrong,
The ills her suffering children know,
The squalor of the city's throng,
The green field's want and woe.

40

O'er Channing's face the tenderness
Of sympathetic sorrow stole,
Like a still shadow, passionless,
The sorrow of the soul.

But when the generous Briton told
How hearts were answering to his own,
And Freedom's rising murmur rolled
Up to the dull-eared throne,

I saw, methought, a glad surprise
Thrill through that frail and pain-worn frame,
And, kindling in those deep, calm eyes,
A still and earnest flame.

51

His few, brief words were such as move
The human heart,—the Faith-sown seeds
Which ripen in the soil of love
To high heroic deeds.

No bars of sect or clime were felt,
The Babel strife of tongues had ceased,
And at one common altar knelt
The Quaker and the priest.

60

And not in vain: with strength renewed,
And zeal refreshed, and hope less dim,
For that brief meeting, each pursued
The path allotted him.

How echoes yet each Western hill
And vale with Channing's dying word!
How are the hearts of freemen still
By that great warning stirred!

The stranger treads his native soil,
And pleads, with zeal unfelt before,
The honest right of British toil,
The claim of England's poor.

70

Before him time-wrought barriers fall,
Old fears subside, old hatreds melt,
And, stretching o'er the sea's blue wall,
The Saxon greets the Celt.

The yeoman on the Scottish lines,
The Sheffield grinder, worn and grim,
The delver in the Cornwall mines,
Look up with hope to him.

80

Swart smiters of the glowing steel,
Dark feeders of the forge's flame,
Pale watchers at the loom and wheel,
Repeat his honoured name.

And thus the influence of that hour
 Of converse on Rhode Island's strand
 Lives in the calm, resistless power
 Which moves our fatherland.

God blesses still the generous thought,
 And still the fitting word He speeds, 90
 And Truth, at His requiring taught,
 He quickens into deeds.

Where is the victory of the grave ?
 What dust upon the spirit lies ?
 God keeps the sacred life he gave,—
 The prophet never dies !

1844.

TO MY FRIEND ON THE DEATH OF HIS SISTER

Sophia Sturge, sister of Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham, the President of the British Complete Suffrage Association, died in the 6th month, 1845. She was the colleague, counsellor, and ever-ready helpmate of her brother in all his vast designs of beneficence. The *Birmingham Pilot* says of her : " Never, perhaps, were the active and passive virtues of the human character more harmoniously and beautifully blended than in this excellent woman."

THINE is a grief, the depth of which another
 May never know;
 Yet, o'er the waters, O my stricken brother !
 To thee I go.

I lean my heart unto thee, sadly folding
 Thy hand in mine;
 With even the weakness of my soul upholding
 The strength of thine.

I never knew, like thee, the dear departed;
 I stood not by 10
 When, in calm trust, the pure and tranquil-hearted
 Lay down to die.

And on thy ears my words of weak condoling
Must vainly fall:
The funeral bell which in thy heart is tolling,
Sounds over all!

I will not mock thee with the poor world's common
And heartless phrase,
Nor wrong the memory of a sainted woman
With idle praise. 20

With silence only as their benediction,
God's angels come
Where, in the shadow of a great affliction,
The soul sits dumb!

Yet would I say what thy own heart approveth:
Our Father's will,
Calling to Him the dear one whom He loveth,
Is mercy still.

Not upon thee or thine the solemn angel
Hath evil wrought: 30
Her funeral anthem is a glad evangel,—
The good die not!

God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly
What He hath given;
They live on earth, in thought and deed, as truly
As in His Heaven.

And she is with thee; in thy path of trial
She walketh yet;
Still with the baptism of thy self-denial
Her locks are wet. 40

Up, then, my brother! Lo, the fields of harvest
Lie white in view!
She lives and loves thee, and the God thou servest
To both is true.

Thrust in thy sickle ! England's toilworn peasants
Thy call abide ;
And she thou mourn'st, a pure and holy presence,
Shall glean beside !

1845.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

HANDS off ! thou tithe-fat plunderer ! play
No trick of priestcraft here !
Back, puny lordling ! darest thou lay
A hand on Elliott's bier ?
Alive, your rank and pomp, as dust.
Beneath his feet he trod :
He knew the locust swarm that cursed
The harvest-fields of God.

On these pale lips, the smothered thought
Which England's millions feel, 10
A fierce and fearful splendour caught,
As from his forge the steel.
Strong-armed as Thor, a shower of fire
His smitten anvil flung ;
God's curse, Earth's wrong, dumb Hunger's ire,
He gave them all a tongue !

Then let the poor man's horny hands
Bear up the mighty dead,
And labour's swart and stalwart bands
Behind as mourners tread. 20
Leave cant and craft their baptized bounds,
Leave rank its minster floor ;
Give England's green and daisied grounds
The poet of the poor !

Lay down upon his Sheaf's green verge
That brave old heart of oak,
With fitting dirge from sounding forge
And pall of furnace smoke !

Where whirls the stone its dizzy rounds,
 And axe and sledge are swung, 30
 And, timing to their stormy sounds,
 His stormy lays are sung.

There let the peasant's step be heard,
 The grinder chant his rhyme;
 Nor patron's praise nor dainty word
 Befits the man or time.
 No soft lament nor dreamer's sigh
 For him whose words were bread;
 The Runic rhyme and spell whereby 40
 The foodless poor were fed !

Pile up the tombs of rank and pride,
 O England, as thou wilt !
 With pomp to nameless worth denied,
 Emblazon titled guilt !
 No part or lot in these we claim;
 But, o'er the sounding wave,
 A common right to Elliott's name,
 A freehold in his grave !

1850.

ICHABOD

This poem was the outcome of the surprise and grief and forecast of evil consequences which I felt on reading the seventh of March speech of Daniel Webster in support of the " compromise," and the Fugitive Slave Law.

So fallen ! so lost ! the light withdrawn
 Which once he wore !
 The glory from his grey hairs gone
 For evermore !

Revile him not, the Tempter hath
 A snare for all;
 And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
 Befit his fall !

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
 When he who might
 Have lighted up and led his age,
 Falls back in night. 10

Scorn ! would the angels laugh, to mark
 A bright soul driven,
 Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
 From hope and heaven !

Let not the land once proud of him
 Insult him now,
 Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
 Dishonoured brow. 20

But let its humbled sons, instead,
 From sea to lake,
 A long lament, as for the dead,
 In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honoured, naught
 Save power remains ;
 A fallen angel's pride of thought,
 Still strong in chains.

All else is gone ; from those great eyes
 The soul has fled : 30
 When faith is lost, when honour dies,
 The man is dead !

Then, pay the reverence of old days
 To his dead fame ;
 Walk backward, with averted gaze,
 And hide the shame !

WORDSWORTH

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF HIS MEMOIRS.

DEAR friends, who read the world aright,
And in its common forms discern
A beauty and a harmony
The many never learn !

Kindred in soul of him who found
In simple flower and leaf and stone
The impulse of the sweetest lays
Our Saxon tongue has known,—

Accept this record of a life
As sweet and pure, as calm and good, 10
As a long day of blindest June
In green field and in wood.

How welcome to our ears, long pained
By strife of sect and party noise,
The brook-like murmur of his song
Of nature's simple joys !

The violet by its mossy stone,
The primrose by the river's brim,
And chance-sown daffodil, have found
Immortal life through him. 20

The sunrise on his breezy lake,
The rosy tints his sunset brought,
World-seen, are gladdening all the vales
And mountain-peaks of thought.

Art builds on sand; the works of pride
And human passion change and fall;
But that which shares the life of God
With Him surviveth all.

BENEDICTTE

God's love and peace be with thee, where
 Soe'er this soft autumnal air
 Lifts the dark tresses of thy hair !

Whether through city casements comes
 Its kiss to thee, in crowded rooms,
 Or, out among the woodland blooms,

It freshens o'er thy thoughtful face,
 Imparting, in its glad embrace,
 Beauty to beauty, grace to grace !

Fair Nature's book together read, 10
 The old wood-paths that knew our tread,
 The maple shadows overhead,—

The hills we climbed, the river seen
 By gleams along its deep ravine,—
 All keep thy memory fresh and green.

Where'er I look, where'er I stray,
 Thy thoughts go with me on my way,
 And hence the prayer I breathe to-day ;

O'er lapse of time and change of scene,
 The weary waste which lies between 20
 Thyself and me, my heart I lean.

Thou lack'st not Friendship's spell-word, nor
 The half-unconscious power to draw
 All hearts to thine by Love's sweet law.

With these good gifts of God is cast
 Thy lot, and many a charm thou hast
 To hold the blessed angels fast.

If, then, a fervent wish for thee
 The gracious heavens will heed from me,
 What should, dear heart, its burden be ?

30

The sighing of a shaken reed,—
 What can I more than meekly plead
 The greatness of our common need ?

God's love,—unchanging, pure, and true,—
 The Paraclete white-shining through
 His peace,—the fall of Hermon's dew !

With such a prayer, on this sweet day,
 As thou mayst hear, and I may say,
 I greet thee, dearest, far away !

1851.

TO MY OLD SCHOOLMASTER

AN EPISTLE NOT AFTER THE MANNER OF HORACE.

OLD friend, kind friend ! lightly down
 Drop time's snow-flakes on thy crown !
 Never be thy shadow less,
 Never fail thy cheerfulness ;
 Care, that kills the cat, may plough
 Wrinkles in the miser's brow,
 Deepen envy's spiteful frown,
 Draw the mouths of bigots down,
 Plague ambition's dream, and sit
 Heavy on the hypocrite,
 Haunt the rich man's door, and ride
 In the gilded coach of pride ;—
 Let the fiend pass !—what can he
 Find to do with such as thee ?
 Seldom comes that evil guest
 Where the conscience lies at rest,
 And brown health and quiet wit
 Smiling on the threshold sit.

10

I, the urchin unto whom,
In that smoked and dingy room. 20
Where the district gave thee rule
O'er its ragged winter school,
Thou didst teach the mysteries
Of those weary A B C's,—
Where, to fill the every pause
Of thy wise and learned saws,
Through the cracked and crazy wall
Came the cradle-rock and squall.
And the goodman's voice, at strife,
With his shrill and tipsy wife,— 30
Luring us by stories old,
With a comic unction told,
More than by the eloquence
Of terse birchen arguments
(Doubtful gain, I fear), to look
With complacence on a book!—
Where the genial pedagogue
Half forgot his rogues to flog,
Citing tale or apologue,
Wise and merry in its drift 40
As was Phædrus' twofold gift,
Had the little rebels known it,
Risum et prudentiam monet!
I,—the man of middle years,
In whose sable locks appears
Many a warning fleck of grey,—
Looking back to that far day,
And thy primal lessons, feel
Grateful smiles my lips unseal,
As, remembering thee, I blend 50
Olden teacher, present friend,
Wise with antiquarian search,
In the scrolls of State and Church:
Named on history's title-page,
Parish-clerk and justice sage;
For the ferule's wholesome awe
Wielding now the sword of law.

Threshing 'Time's neglected sheaves,
 Gathering up the scattered leaves
 Which the wrinkled sibyl cast 60
 Careless from her as she passed,—
 Twofold citizen art thou,
 Freeman of the past and now.
 He who bore thy name of old
 Midway in the heavens did hold
 Over Gibeon moon and sun;
Thou hast bidden them backward run;
 Of to-day the present ray
 Flinging over yesterday!

Let the busy ones deride 70
 What I deem of right thy pride:
 Let the fools their treadmills grind,
 Look not forward nor behind,
 Shuffle in and wriggle out,
 Veer with every breeze about,
 Turning like a windmill sail,
 Or a dog that seeks his tail;
 Let them laugh to see thee fast
 Tabernacled in the Past,
 Working out with eye and lip. 80
 Riddles of old penmanship,
 Patient as Belzoni there
 Sorting out, with loving care,
 Mummies of dead questions stripped
 From their sevenfold manuscript!

Dabbling, in their noisy way,
 In the puddles of to day,
 Little know they of that vast
 Solemn ocean of the past,
 On whose margin, wreck-bespread, 90
 Thou art walking with the dead,
 Questioning the stranded years,
 Waking smiles by turns, and tears,
 As thou callest up again
 Shapes the dust has long o'erlain,—

Fair-haired woman, bearded man,
 Cavalier and Puritan;
 In an age whose eager view
 Seeks but present things, and new,
 Mad for party, sect and gold, 100
 Teaching reverence for the old.

On that shore, with fowler's tact,
 Coolly bagging fact on fact,
 Naught amiss to thee can float,
 Tale, or song, or anecdote;
 Village gossip, centuries old,
 Scandals by our grandams told,
 What the pilgrim's table spread,
 Where he lived, and whom he wed,
 Long-drawn bill of wine and beer 110
 For his ordination cheer,
 Or the flip that wellnigh made
 Glad his funeral cavalcade;
 Weary prose, and poet's lines,
 Flavoured by their age, like wines,
 Eulogistic of some quaint,
 Doubtful, puritanic saint;
 Lays that quickened husking jigs,
 Jests that shook grave periwigs,
 When the parson had his jokes 120
 And his glass, like other folks;
 Sermons that, for mortal hours,
 Taxed our fathers' vital powers,
 As the long nineteenthlies poured
 Downward from the sounding-board,
 And, for fire of Pentecost,
 Touched their beards December's frost.

Time is hastening on, and we
 What our fathers are shall be,
 Shadow-shapes of memory ! 130
 Joined to that vast multitude
 Where the great are but the good,

And the mind of strength shall prove
 Weaker than the heart of love;
 Pride of greybeard wisdom less
 Than the infant's guilelessness,
 And his song of sorrow more
 Than the crown the Psalmist wore !
 Who shall then, with pious zeal,
 At our moss-grown thresholds kneel, 140
 From a stained and stony page
 Reading to a careless age,
 With a patient eye like thine,
 Prosing tale and limping line,
 Names and words the hoary rime
 Of the Past has made sublime ?
 Who shall work for us as well
 The antiquarian's miracle ?
 Who to seeming life recall
 Teacher grave and pupil small ? 150
 Who shall give to thee and me
 Freeholds in futurity ?

Well, whatever lot be mine,
 Long and happy days be thine,
 Ere thy full and honoured age
 Dates of time its latest page !
 Squire for master, State for school,
 Wisely lenient, live and rule;
 Over grown-up knave and rogue
 Play the watchful pedagogue; 160
 Or, while pleasure smiles on duty,
 At the call of youth and beauty,
 Speak for them the spell of law
 Which shall bar and bolt withdraw,
 And the flaming sword remove
 From the Paradise of Love.
 Still, with undimmed eyesight, pore
 Ancient tome and record o'er;
 Still thy week-day lyrics croon,
 Pitch in church the Sunday tune, 170

Showing something, in thy part,
Of the old Puritanic art,
Singer after Sternhold's heart !
In thy pew, for many a year,
Homilies from Oldbug hear,
Who to wit like that of South,
And the Syrian's golden mouth,
Doth the homely pathos add
Which the pilgrim preachers had ;
Breaking, like a child at play, 180
Gilded idols of the day,
'Cant of knave and pomp of fool
Tossing with his ridicule,
Yet, in earnest or in jest,
Ever keeping truth abreast.
And, when thou art called, at last,
To thy townsmen of the past,
Not as stranger shalt thou come ;
Thou shalt find thyself at home
With the little and the big, 190
Woollen cap and periwig,
Madam in her high-laced ruff,
Goody in her home-made stuff,—
Wise and simple, rich and poor,
Thou hast known them all before !

1851.

BURNS

ON RECEIVING A SPRIG OF HEATHER IN BLOSSOM.

No more these simple flowers belong
To Scottish maid and lover ;
Sown in the common soil of song,
They bloom the wide world over.

In smiles and tears, in sun and showers,
The minstrel and the heather,
The deathless singer and the flowers
He sang of live together.

Wild heather-bells and Robert Burns !
The moorland flower and peasant !
How, at their mention, memory turns
Her pages old and pleasant !

10

The grey sky wears again its gold
And purple of adorning.
And manhood's noonday shadows hold
The dews of boyhood's morning.

The dews that washed the dust and soil
From off the wings of pleasure,
The sky, that flecked the ground of toil
With golden threads of leisure.

20

I call to mind the summer day,
The early harvest mowing,
The sky with sun and clouds at play,
And flowers with breezes blowing.

I hear the blackbird in the corn,
The locust in the haying ;
And, like the fabled hunter's horn,
Old tunes my heart is playing.

How oft that day, with fond delay,
I sought the maple's shadow,
And sang with Burns the hours away,
Forgetful of the meadow !

30

Bees hummed, birds twittered, overhead
I heard the squirrels leaping.
The good dog listened while I read,
And wagged his tail in keeping.

I watched him while in sportive mood
I read "*The Two Dogs*" story,
And half believed he understood
The poet's allegory.

40

Sweet day, sweet songs ! The golden hours
Grew brighter for that singing,
From brook and bird and meadow flowers
A dearer welcome bringing.

New light on home-seen Nature beamed,
New glory over Woman ;
And daily life and duty seemed
No longer poor and common.

I woke to find the simple truth
Of fact and feeling better
Than all the dreams that held my youth
A still repining debtor : 50

That Nature gives her handmaid, Art,
The themes of sweet discoursing ;
The tender idyls of the heart
In every tongue rehearsing.

Why dream of lands of gold and pearl,
Of loving knight and lady,
When farmer boy and barefoot girl
Were wandering there already ? 60

I saw through all familiar things
The romance underlying ;
The joys and griefs that plume the wings
Of Fancy skyward flying.

I saw the same blithe day return,
The same sweet fall of even,
That rose on wooded Craigie-burn,
And sank on crystal Devon.

I matched with Scotland's heathery hills
The sweetbrier and the clover ; 70
With Ayr and Doon, my native rills,
Their wood-hymns chanting over.

O'er rank and pomp, as he had seen,
 I saw the Man uprising;
 No longer common or unclean,
 The child of God's baptizing !

With clearer eyes I saw the worth
 Of life among the lowly;
 The Bible at his Cotter's hearth
 Had made my own more holy.

80

And if at times an evil strain,
 To lawless love appealing,
 Broke in upon the sweet refrain
 Of pure and healthful feeling,

It died upon the eye and ear,
 No inward answer gaining;
 No heart had I to see or hear
 The discord and the staining.

Let those who never erred forget
 His worth, in vain bewailings;
 Sweet Soul of Song ! I own my debt
 Uncancelled by his failings !

90

Lament who will the ribald line
 Which tells his lapse from duty.
 How kissed the maddening lips of wine
 Or wanton ones of beauty ;

But think, while falls that shade between
 The erring one and Heaven.
 That he who loved like Magdalen,
 Like her may be forgiven.

100

Not his the song whose thunderous chime
 Eternal echoes render ;
 The mournful Tuscan's haunted rhyme,
 And Milton's starry splendour !

But who his human heart has laid
 To Nature's bosom nearer ?
 Who sweetened toil like him, or paid
 To love a tribute dearer ?

Through all his tuneful art, how strong
 The human feeling gushes !
 The very moonlight of his song
 Is warm with smiles and blushes !

110.

Give lettered pomp to teeth of Time,
 So " Bonnie Doon " but tarry ;
 Blot out the Epic's stately rhyme,
 But spare his Highland Mary !

1854.

TO JAMES T. FIELDS

ON A BLANK LEAF OF " POEMS PRINTED, NOT
 PUBLISHED."

WELL thought ! who would not rather hear
 The songs to Love and Friendship sung,
 Than those which move the stranger's tongue,
 And feed his unselected ear ?

Our social joys are more than fame ;
 Life withers in the public look.
 Why mount the pillory of a book,
 Or barter comfort for a name ?

Who in a house of glass would dwell,
 With curious eyes at every pane ?
 To ring him in and out again,
 Who wants the public crier's bell ?

10

To see the angel in one's way,
 Who wants to play the ass's part, —
 Bear on his back the wizard Art,
 And in his service speak or bray ?

And who his manly locks would shave
 And quench the eyes of common sense,
 To share the noisy recompense
 That mocked the shorn and blinded slave ? 25

The heart has needs beyond the head,
 And, starving in the plenitude
 Of strange gifts, craves its common food,—
 Our human nature's daily bread.

We are but men : no gods are we,
 To sit in mid-heaven, cold and bleak,
 Each separate, on his painful peak,
 Thin-cloaked in self-complacency !

Better his lot whose axe is swung
 In Wartburg's woods, or that poor girl's 30
 Who by the Ilm her spindle whirls
 And sings the songs that Luther sung,

Than his who, old, and cold, and vain,
 At Weimar sat, a demigod,
 And bowed with Jove's imperial nod
 His votaries in and out again !

Ply, Vanity, thy winged feet !
 Ambition, hew thy rocky stair !
 Who envies him who feeds on air
 The icy splendour of his seat ? 40

I see your Alps, above me, cut
 The dark, cold sky ; and dim and lone
 I see ye sitting, — stone on stone, —
 With human senses dulled and shut.

I could not reach you, if I would,
 Nor sit among your cloudy shapes ;
 And (spare the fable of the grapes
 And fox) I would not if I could.

Keep to your lofty pedestals !
 The safer plain below I choose : 50
 Who never wins can rarely lose,
 Who never climbs as rarely falls.

Let such as love the eagle's scream
 Divide with him his home of ice :
 For me shall gentler notes suffice,—
 The valley-song of bird and stream ;

The pastoral bleat, the drone of bees,
 The flail-beat chiming far away,
 The cattle-low, at shut of day,
 The voice of God in leaf and breeze ! 60

Then lend thy hand, my wiser friend,
 And help me to the vales below,
 (In truth, I have not far to go,)
 Where sweet with flowers the fields extend.

1858.

BROWN OF OSSAWATOMIE

JOHN BROWN of Ossawatomie spake on his dying day :
 " I will not have to shrive my soul a priest in Slavery's
 pay.

But let some poor slave-mother whom I have striven to
 free,

With her children, from the gallows-stair put up a
 prayer for me !"

John Brown of Ossawatomie, they led him out to die ;
 And lo ! a poor slave-mother with her little child
 pressed nigh.

Then the bold, blue eye grew tender, and the old harsh
 face grew mild,

As he stooped between the jeering ranks and kissed the
 negro's child !

The shadows of his stormy life that moment fell
 apart;
 And they who blamed the bloody hand forgave the
 loving heart.
 That kiss from all its guilty means redeemed the good
 intent,
 And round the grisly fighter's hair the martyr's aureole
 bent !

Perish with him the folly that seeks through evil
 good !
 Long live the generous purpose unstained with human
 blood !
 Not the raid of midnight terror, but the thought which
 underlies ;
 Not the borderer's pride of daring, but the Christian's
 sacrifice.

Nevermore may yon Blue Ridges the Northern rifle
 hear,
 Nor see the light of blazing homes flash on the negro's
 spear.
 But let the free-winged angel Truth their guarded
 passes scale,
 To teach that right is more than might, and justice
 more than mail !

So vainly shall Virginia set her battle in array ;
 In vain her trampling squadrons knead the winter snow
 with clay.
 She may strike the pouncing eagle, but she dares not
 harm the dove ;
 And every gate she bars to Hate shall open wide to
 Love !

1859.

NAPLES

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT C. WATERSTON, OF BOSTON.

Helen Waterston died at Naples in her eighteenth year, and lies buried in the Protestant cemetery there. The stone over her grave bears the lines,

Fold her, O Father, in Thine arms,
And let her henceforth be
A messenger of love between
Our human hearts and Thee.

I GIVE thee joy!—I know to thee
The dearest spot on earth must be
Where sleeps thy loved one by the summer sea;

Where, near her sweetest poet's tomb,
The land of Virgil gave thee room
To lay thy flower with her perpetual bloom.

I know that when the sky shut down
Behind thee on the gleaming town,
On Baiæ's baths and Posilippo's crown;

And, through thy tears, the mocking day
Burned Ischia's mountain lines away, II
And Capri melted in its sunny bay;

Through thy great farewell sorrow shot
The sharp pang of a bitter thought
That slaves must tread around that holy spot.

Thou knewest not the land was blest
In giving thy beloved rest,
Holding the fond hope closer to her breast

That every sweet and saintly grave
Was freedom's prophecy, and gave 20
The pledge of Heaven to sanctify and save.

That pledge is answered. To thy ear
The unchained city sends its cheer,
And, tuned to joy, the muffled bells of fear

Ring Victor in. The land sits free
And happy by the summer sea,
And Bourbon Naples now is Italy !

She smiles above her broken chain
The languid smile that follows pain,
Stretching her cramped limbs to the sun again.

Oh, joy for all, who hear her call
From grey Camaldoli's convent-wall
And Elmo's towers to freedom's carnival !

A new life breathes among her vines
And olives, like the breath of pines
Blown downward from the breezy Apennines.

Lean, O my friend, to meet that breath,
Rejoice as one who witnesseth
Beauty from ashes rise, and life from death !

Thy sorrow shall no more be pain,
Its tears shall fall in sunlit rain.
Writing the grave with flowers: " Arisen again !"
1860.

A MEMORIAL

Moses Austin Cartland, a dear friend and relation, who led a faithful life as a teacher, and died in the summer of 1863.

Oh, thicker, deeper, darker growing,
The solemn vista to the tomb
Must know henceforth another shadow.
And give another cypress room.

In love surpassing that of brothers,
We walked, O friend, from childhood's day;
And, looking back o'er fifty summers,
Our footprints track a common way.

One in our faith, and one our longing
To make the world within our reach 10
Somewhat the better for our living,
And gladder for our human speech.

Thou heard'st with me the far-off voices,
The old beguiling song of fame,
But life to thee was warm and present,
And love was better than a name.

To homely joys and loves and friendships
Thy genial nature fondly clung;
And so the shadow on the dial
Ran back and left thee always young. 20

And who could blame the generous weakness.
Which, only to thyself unjust,
So overprized the worth of others,
And dwarfed thy own with self-distrust ?

All hearts grew warmer in the presence
Of one who, seeking not his own,
Gave freely for the love of giving,
Nor reaped for self the harvest sown.

Thy greeting smile was pledge and prelude
Of generous deeds and kindly words; 30
In thy large heart were fair guest-chambers,
Open to sunrise and the birds !

The task was thine to mould and fashion
Life's plastic newness into grace:
To make the boyish heart heroic,
And light with thought the maiden's face.

O'er all the land, in town and prairie,
With bended heads of mourning, stand
The living forms that owe their beauty
And fitness to thy shaping hand. 40

Thy call has come in ripened manhood.
The noonday calm of heart and mind,
While I, who dreamed of thy remaining
To mourn me, linger still behind :

Live on, to own, with self-upbraiding,
A debt of love still due from me,—
The vain remembrance of occasions,
For ever lost, of serving thee.

It was not mine among thy kindred
To join the silent funeral prayers,
But all that long sad day of summer
My tears of mourning dropped with theirs.

50

All day the sea-waves sobbed with sorrow,
The birds forgot their merry trills :
All day I heard the pines lamenting
With thine upon thy homestead hills.

Green be those hillside pines for ever.
And green the meadowy lowlands be,
And green the old memorial beeches,
Name-carven in the woods of Lee !

60

Still let them greet thy life companions
Who thither turn their pilgrim feet,
In every mossy line recalling
A tender memory sadly sweet.

O friend ! if thought and sense avail not
To know thee henceforth as thou art,
That all is well with thee for ever
I trust the instincts of my heart.

Thine be the quiet habitations,
Thine the green pastures, blossom-sown,
And smiles of saintly recognition,
As sweet and tender as thy own.

70

Thou com'st not from the hush and shadow
To meet us, but to thee we come;
With thee we never can be strangers,
And where thou art must still be home.

1863.

BRYANT ON HIS BIRTHDAY

WE praise not now the poet's art,
The rounded beauty of his song;
Who weighs him from his life apart
Must do his nobler nature wrong.

Not for the eye, familiar grown
With charms to common sight denied,—
The marvellous gift he shares alone
With him who walked on Rydal-side;

Not for rapt hymn nor woodland lay,
Too grave for smiles, too sweet for tears; 10
We speak his praise who wears to-day
The glory of his seventy years.

When Peace brings Freedom in her train,
Let happy lips his songs rehearse:
His life is now his noblest strain,
His manhood better than his verse!

Thank God! his hand on Nature's keys
Its cunning keeps at life's full span;
But, dimmed and dwarfed, in times like these,
The poet seems beside the man! 20

So be it! let the garlands die,
The singer's wreath, the painter's meed,
Let our names perish, if thereby
Our country may be saved and freed!

1864.

GEORGE L. STEARNS

No man rendered greater service to the cause of freedom than Major Stearns in the great struggle between invading slaveholders and the free settlers of Kansas.

He has done the work of a true man,—
 Crown him, honour him, love him.
 Weep over him, tears of woman.
 Stoop manliest brows above him !

O dusky mothers and daughters,
 Vigils of mourning keep for him !
 Up in the mountains, and down by the waters,
 Lift up your voices and weep for him !

For the warmest of hearts is frozen,
 The freest of hands is still ; 10
 And the gap in our picked and chosen
 The long years may not fill.

No duty could overtask him,
 No need his will outrun ;
 Or ever our lips could ask him.
 His hands the work had done.

He forgot his own soul for others,
 Himself to his neighbour lending ;
 He found the Lord in his suffering brothers,
 And not in the clouds descending. 20

So the bed was sweet to die on,
 Whence he saw the doors wide swung
 Against whose bolted iron
 The strength of his life was flung.

And he saw ere his eye was darkened
 The sheaves of the harvest-bringing,
 And knew while his ear yet hearkened
 The voice of the reapers singing.

Ah, well ! The world is discreet;
 There are plenty to pause and wait; 30
 But here was a man who set his feet
 Sometimes in advance of fate;

Plucked off the old bark when the inner
 Was slow to renew it,
 And put to the Lord's work the sinner
 When saints failed to do it.

Never rode to the wrong's redressing
 A worthier paladin.
 Shall he not hear the blessing,
 " Good and faithful, enter in !" 40

1867.

GARIBALDI

IN trance and dream of old, God's prophet saw
 The casting down of thrones. Thou, watching lone
 The hot Sardinian coast-line, hazy-hilled,
 Where, fringing round Caprera's rocky zone
 With foam, the slow waves gather and withdraw,
 Behold'st the vision of the seer fulfilled,
 And hear'st the sea-winds burdened with a sound
 Of falling chains, as, one by one, unbound,
 The nations lift their right hands up and swear
 Their oath of freedom. From the chalk-white wall
 Of England, from the black Carpathian range, 11
 Along the Danube and the Theiss, through all
 The passes of the Spanish Pyrenees,
 And from the Seine's thronged banks, a murmur strange
 And glad floats to thee o'er thy summer seas
 On the salt wind that stirs thy whitening hair,—
 The song of freedom's bloodless victories !
 Rejoice, O Garibaldi ! Though thy sword
 Failed at Rome's gates, and blood seemed vainly
 poured
 Where, in Christ's name, the crown'd infidel 20
 Of France wrought murder with the arms of hell

On that sad mountain slope whose ghostly dead,
Unmindful of the grey exorcist's ban,
Walk, unappeased, the chambered Vatican,

And draw the curtains of Napoleon's bed !
God's providence is not blind, but, full of eyes,
It searches all the refuges of lies ;

And in His time and way, the accursed things
Before whose evil feet thy battle-gage

Has clashed defiance from hot youth to age 30
Shall perish. All men shall be priests and kings,

One royal brotherhood, one church made free
By love, which is the law of liberty !

1869.

THE SINGER

This poem was written on the death of Alice Cary. Her sister Phoebe, heart-broken by her loss, followed soon after. Noble and richly gifted, lovely in person and character, they left behind them only friends and admirers.

YEARS since (but names to me before),
Two sisters sought at eve my door ;
Two song-birds wandering from their nest,
A grey old farm-house in the West.

How fresh of life the younger one,
Half smiles, half tears, like rain in sun !
Her gravest mood could scarce displace
The dimples of her nut-brown face.

Wit sparkled on her lips not less
For quick and tremulous tenderness ; 10
And, following close her merriest glance,
Dreamed through her eyes the heart's romance.

Timid and still, the elder had
Even then a smile too sweetly sad :
The crown of pain that all must wear
Too early pressed her midnight hair.

Yet ere the summer eve grew long,
Her modest lips were sweet with song;
A memory haunted all her words
Of clover-fields and singing birds. 20

Her dark, dilating eyes expressed
The broad horizons of the west;
Her speech dropped prairie flowers; the gold
Of harvest wheat about her rolled.

Fore-doomed to song she seemed to me:
I queried not with destiny:
I knew the trial and the need,
Yet, all the more, I said, God speed !

What could I other than I did ?
Could I a singing-bird forbid ? 30
Deny the wind-stirred leaf ? Rebuke
The music of the forest brook ?

She went with morning from my door,
But left me richer than before;
Thenceforth I knew her voice of cheer,
The welcome of her partial ear.

Years passed: through all the land her name
A pleasant household word became:
All felt behind the singer stood
A sweet and gracious womanhood. 40

Her life was earnest work, not play;
Her tired feet climbed a weary way;
And even through her lightest strain
We heard an undertone of pain.

Unseen of her her fair fame grew,
The good she did she rarely knew,
Ungessed of her in life the love
That rained its tears her grave above.

When last I saw her, full of peace,
She waited for her great release;
And that old friend so sage and bland,
Our later Franklin, held her hand. 50

For all that patriot bosoms stirs
Had moved that woman's heart of hers,
And men who toiled in storm and sun
Found her their meet companion.

Our converse, from her suffering bed
To healthful themes of life she led:
The out-door world of bud and bloom
And light and sweetness filled her room. 60

Yet evermore an underthought
Of loss to come within us wrought,
And all the while we felt the strain
Of the strong will that conquered pain.

God giveth quietness at last!
The common way that all have passed
She went, with mortal yearnings fond,
To fuller life and love beyond.

Fold the rapt soul in your embrace,
My dear ones! Give the singer place! 70
To you, to her,—I know not where,—
I lift the silence of a prayer.

For only thus our own we find;
The gone before, the left behind,
All mortal voices die between;
The unheard reaches the unseen.

Again the blackbirds sing: the streams
Wake, laughing, from their winter dreams,
And tremble in the April showers
The tassels of the maple flowers. 80

But not for her has spring renewed
The sweet surprises of the wood;
And bird and flower are lost to her
Who was their best interpreter !

What to shut eyes has God revealed ?
What hear the ears that death has sealed ?
What undreamed beauty passing show
Requites the loss of all we know ?

O silent land, to which we move,
Enough if there alone be love,
And mortal need can ne'er outgrow
What it is waiting to bestow !

90

O white soul ! from that far-off shore
Float some sweet song the waters o'er,
Our faith confirm, our fears dispel,
With the old voice we loved so well !

1871.

SUMNER

"I am not one who has disgraced beauty of sentiment by deformity of conduct, or the maxims of a freeman by the actions of a slave; but, by the grace of God, I have kept my life unsullied."—MILTON'S *Defence of the People of England*.

O MOTHER STATE ! the winds of March
Blew chill o'er Auburn's Field of God,
Where, slow, beneath a leaden arch
Of sky, thy mourning children trod.

And now, with all thy woods in leaf,
Thy fields in flower, beside thy dead
Thou sittest, in thy robes of grief,
A Rachel yet uncomforted !

And once again the organ swells,
Once more the flag is half-way hung,
And yet again the mournful bells
In all thy steeple-towers are rung.

10

And I, obedient to thy will,
Have come a simple wreath to lay,
Superfluous, on a grave that still
Is sweet with all the flowers of May.

I take, with awe, the task assigned;
It may be that my friend might miss,
In his new sphere of heart and mind,
Some token from my hand in this.

20

By many a tender memory moved,
Along the past my thought I send;
The record of the cause he loved
Is the best record of its friend.

No trumpet sounded in his ear,
He saw not Sinai's cloud and flame,
But never yet to Hebrew seer
A clearer voice of duty came.

God said: "Break thou these yokes; undo
These heavy burdens. I ordain
A work to last thy whole life through,
A ministry of strife and pain.

30

"Forgo thy dreams of lettered ease,
Put thou the scholar's promise by,
The rights of man are more than these."
He heard, and answered: "Here am I!"

He set his face against the blast,
His feet against the flinty shard,
Till the hard service grew, at last,
Its own exceeding great reward.

40

Lifted like Saul's above the crowd,
Upon his kingly forehead fell
The first sharp bolt of Slavery's cloud,
Launched at the truth he urged so well.

Ah ! never yet, at rack or stake,
Was sorer loss made Freedom's gain,
Than his, who suffered for her sake
The beak-torn Titan's lingering pain !

The fixed star of his faith, through all
Loss, doubt, and peril, shone the same ; 50
As through a night of storm, some tall,
Strong lighthouse lifts its steady flame.

Beyond the dust and smoke he saw
The sheaves of Freedom's large increase,
The holy fanes of equal law,
The New Jerusalem of peace.

The weak might fear, the worldling mock,
The faint and blind of heart regret ;
All knew at last th' eternal rock
On which his forward feet were set. 60

The subtlest scheme of compromise
Was folly to his purpose bold ;
The strongest mesh of party lies
Weak to the simplest truth he told.

One language held his heart and lip,
Straight onward to his goal he trod,
And proved the highest statesmanship
Obedience to the voice of God.

No wail was in his voice,—none heard,
When treason's storm-cloud blackest grew,
The weakness of a doubtful word ; 71
His duty, and the end, he knew.

The first to smite, the first to spare ;
When once the hostile ensigns fell,
He stretched out hands of generous care
To lift the foe he fought so well.

For there was nothing base or small
Or craven in his soul's broad plan;
Forgiving all things personal,
He hated only wrong to man. 80

The old traditions of his State,
The memories of her great and good,
Took from his life a fresher date,
And in himself embodied stood.

How felt the greed of gold and place,
The venal crew that schemed and planned,
The fine scorn of that haughty face,
The spurning of that bribeless hand !

If than Rome's tribunes statelier
He wore his senatorial robe, 90
His lofty port was all for her,
The one dear spot on all the globe.

If to the master's plea he gave
The vast contempt his manhood felt,
He saw a brother in the slave,—
With man as equal man he dealt.

Proud was he ? If his presence kept
Its grandeur wheresoe'er he trod,
As if from Plutarch's gallery stepped
The hero and the demigod, 100

None failed, at least, to reach his ear,
Nor want nor woe appealed in vain;
The homesick soldier knew his cheer,
And blessed him from his ward of pain.

Safely his dearest friends may own
The slight defects he never hid,
The surface-blemish in the stone
Of the tall, stately pyramid.

Suffice it that he never brought
His conscience to the public mart; 110
But lived himself the truth he taught,
White-souled, clean-handed, pure of heart.

What if he felt the natural pride
Of power in noble use, too true
With thin humilities to hide
The work he did, the lore he knew ?

Was he not just ? Was any wronged
By that assured self-estimate ?
He took but what to him belonged,
Unenvious of another's state. 120

Well might he heed the words he spake,
And scan with care the written page
Through which he still shall warm and wake
The hearts of men from age to age.

Ah ! who shall blame him now because
He solaced thus his hours of pain !
Should not the o'erworn thresher pause,
And hold to light his golden grain ?

No sense of humour dropped its oil
On the hard ways his purpose went; 130
Small play of fancy lightened toil;
He spake alone the thing he meant.

He loved his books, the Art that hints
A beauty veiled behind its own,
The graver's line, the pencil's tints,
The chisel's shape evoked from stone.

He cherished, void of selfish ends,
The social courtesies that bless
And sweeten life, and loved his friends
With most unworldly tenderness. 140

But still his tired eyes rarely learned
 The glad relief by Nature brought;
 Her mountain ranges never turned
 His current of persistent thought.

The sea rolled chorus to his speech
 Three-banked like Latium's tall trireme,
 With labouring oars; the grove and beach
 Were Forum and the Academe.

The sensuous joy from all things fair
 His strenuous bent of soul repressed, 150
 And left from youth to silvered hair
 Few hours for pleasure, none for rest.

For all his life was poor without,
 O Nature, make the last amends!
 Train all thy flowers his grave about,
 And make thy singing-birds his friends!

Revive again, thou summer rain,
 The broken turf upon his bed!
 Breathe, summer wind, thy tenderest strain
 Of low, sweet music overhead! 160

With calm and beauty symbolize
 The peace which follows long annoy,
 And lend our earth-bent, mourning eyes
 Some hint of his diviner joy.

For safe with right and truth he is,
 As God lives he must live alway;
 There is no end for souls like his,
 No night for children of the day!

Nor cant nor poor solitudes
 Made weak his life's great argument; 170
 Small leisure his for frames and moods
 Who followed Duty where she went.

The broad, fair fields of God he saw
Beyond the bigot's narrow bound;
The truths he moulded into law
In Christ's beatitudes he found.

His state-craft was the Golden Rule,
His right of vote a sacred trust;
Clear, over threat and ridicule,
All heard his challenge: "Is it just?" 180

And when the hour supreme had come,
Not for himself a thought he gave;
In that last pang of martyrdom,
His care was for the half-freed slave.

Not vainly dusky hands upbore,
In prayer, the passing soul to heaven
Whose mercy to His suffering poor
Was service to the Master given.

Long shall the good State's annals tell,
Her children's children long be taught, 190
How, praised or blamed, he guarded well
The trust he neither shunned nor sought.

If for one moment turned thy face,
O Mother, from thy son, not long
He waited calmly in his place
The sure remorse which follows wrong.

Forgiven be the State he loved
The one brief lapse, the single blot;
Forgotten be the stain removed,
Her righted record shows it not! 200

The lifted sword above her shield
With jealous care shall guard his fame;
The pine-tree on her ancient field
To all the winds shall speak his name.

The marble image of her son
 Her loving hands shall yearly crown,
 And from her pictured Pantheon
 His grand, majestic face look down.

O State so passing rich before,
 Who now shall doubt thy highest claim ?
 The world that counts thy jewels o'er 211
 Shall longest pause at Sumner's name !
 1874.

WITHIN THE GATE

L. M. C.

We sat together, last May-day, and talked
 Of the dear friends who walked
 Beside us, sharers of the hopes and fears
 Of five and forty years,

Since first we met in Freedom's hope forlorn,
 And heard her battle-horn
 Sound through the valleys of the sleeping North,
 Calling her children forth,

And youth pressed forward with hope-lighted eyes,
 And age, with forecast wise 10
 Of the long strife before the triumph won,
 Girded his armour on.

Sadly, as name by name we called the roll,
 We heard the dead-bells toll
 For the unanswering many, and we knew
 The living were the few.

And we, who waited our own call before
 The inevitable door,
 Listened and looked, as all have done, to win
 Some token from within. 20

No sign we saw, we heard no voices call;
 The impenetrable wall
 Cast down its shadow, like an awful doubt,
 On all who sat without.

Of many a hint of life beyond the veil,
 And many a ghostly tale
 Wherewith the ages spanned the gulf between
 The seen and the unseen,

Seeking from omen, trance, and dream to gain
 Solace to doubtful pain, 30
 And touch, with groping hands, the garment hem
 Of truth sufficing them,

We talked; and, turning from the sore unrest
 Of an all-baffling quest,
 We thought of holy lives that from us passed
 Hopeful unto the last,

As if they saw beyond the river of death,
 Like Him of Nazareth,
 The many mansions of the Eternal days
 Lift up their gates of praise. 40

And, hushed to silence by a reverent awe,
 Methought, O friend, I saw
 In thy true life of word, and work, and thought
 The proof of all we sought.

Did we not witness in the life of thee
 Immortal prophecy?
 And feel, when with thee, that thy footsteps trod
 An everlasting road?

Not for brief days thy generous sympathies,
 Thy scorn of selfish ease; 50
 Not for the poor prize of an earthly goal
 Thy strong uplift of soul.

Than thine was never turned a fonder heart
 To nature and to art
 In fair-formed Hellas in her golden prime,
 Thy Philothea's time.

Yet, loving beauty, thou couldst pass it by,
 And for the poor deny
 Thyself, and see thy fresh, sweet flower of fame
 Wither in blight and blame. 60

Sharing His love who holds in His embrace
 The lowliest of our race,
 Sure the Divine economy must be
 Conservative of thee !

For truth must live with truth, self-sacrifice
 Seek out its great allies ;
 Good must find good by gravitation sure,
 And love with love endure.

And so, since thou hast passed within the gate
 Whereby awhile I wait, 70
 I give blind grief and blinder sense the lie :
 Thou hast not lived to die !

1881.

IN MEMORY

JAMES T. FIELDS.

As a guest who may not stay
 Long and sad farewells to say
 Glides with smiling face away,

Of the sweetness and the zest
 Of thy happy life possessed
 Thou hast left us at thy best.

Warm of heart and clear of brain,
 Of thy sun-bright spirit's wane
 Thou hast spared us all the pain.

Now that thou hast gone away, 10
What is left of one to say
Who was open as the day ?

What is there to gloss or shun ?
Save with kindly voices none
. Speak thy name beneath the sun.

Safe thou art on every side,
Friendship nothing finds to hide,
Love's demand is satisfied.

Over manly strength and worth,
At thy desk of toil, or hearth, 20
Played the lambent light of mirth,—

Mirth that lit, but never burned ;
All thy blame to pity turned ;
Hatred thou hadst never learned.

Every harsh and vexing thing
At thy home-fire lost its sting ;
Where thou wast was always spring.

And thy perfect trust in good,
Faith in man and womanhood,
Chance and change and time withstood.

Small respect for cant and whine, 31
Bigot's zeal and hate malign,
Had that sunny soul of thine.

But to thee was duty's claim
Sacred, and thy lips became
Reverent with one holy Name.

. Therefore, on thy unknown way,
Go in God's peace ! We who stay
But a little while delay.

Keep for us, O friend, where'er
Thou art waiting, all that here
Made thy earthly presence dear;

40

Something of thy pleasant past
On a ground of wonder east,
In the stiller waters glassed !

Keep the human heart of thee;
Let the mortal only be
Clothed in immortality.

And when fall our feet as fell
Thine upon the asphodel,
Let thy old smile greet us well;

50

Proving in a world of bliss
What we fondly dream in this,—
Love is one with holiness !

1881.

THE POET AND THE CHILDREN

LONGFELLOW.

With a glory of winter sunshine
Over his locks of grey,
In the old historic mansion
He sat on his last birthday;

With his books and his pleasant pictures,
And his household and his kin,
While a sound as of myriads singing
From far and near stole in.

It came from his own fair city,
From the prairie's boundless plain,
From the Golden Gate of sunset,
And the cedarn woods of Maine.

10

And his heart grew warm within him,
 And his moistening eyes grew dim,
 For he knew that his country's children
 Were singing the songs of him :

The lays of his life's glad morning,
 The psalms of his evening time,
 Whose echoes shall float for ever
 On the winds of every clime. 20

All their beautiful consolations,
 Sent forth like birds of cheer,
 Came flocking back to his windows,
 And sang in the Poet's ear.

Grateful, but solemn and tender,
 The music rose and fell
 With a joy akin to sadness
 And a greeting like farewell.

With a sense of awe he listened
 To the voices sweet and young; 30
 The last of earth and the first of heaven
 Seemed in the songs they sung.

And waiting a little longer
 For the wonderful change to come,
 He heard the Summoning Angel,
 Who calls God's children home !

And to him in a holier welcome
 Was the mystical meaning given
 Of the words of the blessed Master :
 " Of such is the kingdom of heaven !" 40

1882.

TO A CAPE ANN SCHOONER

LUCK to the craft that bears this name of mine,
 Good fortune follow with her golden spoon
 The glazèd hat and tarry pantaloons;
 And wheresoe'er her keel shall cut the brine,
 Cod, hake and haddock quarrel for her line.
 Shipped with her crew, whatever wind may blow,
 Or tides delay, my wish with her shall go,
 Fishing by proxy. Would that it might show
 At need her course, in lack of sun and star,
 Where icebergs threaten, and the sharp reefs are;
 Lift the blind fog on Anticosti's lee 11
 And Avalon's rock; make populous the sea
 Round Grand Manan with eager finny swarms,
 Break the long calms, and charm away the storms.

1886.

TO J. P.

John Pierpont, the eloquent preacher and poet of Boston.

NOT as a poor requital of the joy
 With which my childhood heard that lay of thine,
 Which, like an echo of the song divine
 At Bethlehem breathed above the Holy Boy,
 Bore to my ear the Airs of Palestine,—
 Not to the poet, but the man I bring
 In friendship's fearless trust my offering:
 How much it lacks I feel, and thou wilt see,
 Yet well I know that thou hast deemed with me
 Life all too earnest, and its time too short 10
 For dreamy ease and Fancy's graceful sport;
 And girded for thy constant strife with wrong,
 Like Nehemiah fighting while he wrought
 The broken walls of Zion, even thy song
 Hath a rude martial tone, a blow in every thought!

1843.

OCCASIONAL POEMS

CHICAGO

The great fire at Chicago was on October 8-10, 1871.

MEN said at vespers : " All is well !"
In one wild night the city fell ;
Fell shrines of prayer and marts of gain
Before the fiery hurricane.

On threescore spires had sunset shone,
Where ghastly sunrise looked on none.
Men clasped each other's hands, and said :
" The City of the West is dead !"

Brave hearts who fought, in slow retreat,
The fiends of fire from street to street, 10
Turned, powerless, to the blinding glare,
The dumb defiance of despair.

A sudden impulse thrilled each wire
That signalled round that sea of fire ;
Swift words of cheer, warm heart-throbs came ;
In tears of pity died the flame !

From East, from West, from South and North,
The messages of hope shot forth,
And, underneath the severing wave,
The world, full-handed, reached to save. 20

Fair seemed the old; but fairer still
 The new, the dreary void shall fill
 With dearer homes than those o'erthrown,
 For love shall lay each corner-stone.

Rise, stricken city! from thee throw
 The ashen sackcloth of thy woe;
 And build, as to Amphion's strain,
 To songs of cheer thy walls again!

How shrivelled in thy hot distress
 The primal sin of selfishness!
 How instant rose, to take thy part,
 The angel in the human heart!

30

Ah! not in vain the flames that tossed
 Above thy dreadful holocaust;
 The Christ again has preached through thee
 The Gospel of Humanity!

Then lift once more thy towers on high,
 And fret with spires the western sky,
 To tell that God is yet with us,
 And love is still miraculous!

40

1871.

HYMN

FOR THE OPENING OF PLYMOUTH CHURCH, ST. PAUL,
 MINNESOTA.

ALL things are Thine: no gift have we,
 Lord of all gifts, to offer Thee;
 And hence with grateful hearts to-day,
 Thy own before Thy feet we lay.

Thy will was in the builders' thought;
 Thy hand unseen amidst us wrought;
 Through mortal motive, scheme and plan,
 Thy wise eternal purpose ran.

No lack Thy perfect fullness knew;
For human needs and longings grew 10
This house of prayer, this home of rest,
In the fair garden of the West.

In weakness and in want we call
On Thee for whom the heavens are small;
Thy glory is Thy children's good,
Thy joy Thy tender Fatherhood.

O Father! deign these walls to bless,
Fill with Thy love their emptiness,
And let their door a gateway be
To lead us from ourselves to Thee! 20

1872.

LEXINGTON

1775.

No Berserk thirst of blood had they,
No battle-joy was theirs, who set
Against the alien bayonet
Their homespun breasts in that old day.

Their feet had trodden peaceful ways;
They loved not strife, they dreaded pain;
They saw not, what to us is plain,
That God would make man's wrath His praise.

No seers were they, but simple men;
Its vast results the future hid: 10
The meaning of the work they did
Was strange and dark and doubtful then.

Swift as their summons came they left
The plough mid-furrow standing still,
The half-ground corn grist in the mill,
The spade in earth, the axe in cleft.

They went where duty seemed to call,
 They scarcely asked the reason why;
 They only knew they could but die,
 And death was not the worst of all !

20

Of man for man the sacrifice,
 All that was theirs to give, they gave.
 The flowers that blossomed from their grave
 Have sown themselves beneath all skies.

Their death-shot shook the feudal tower,
 And shattered slavery's chain as well;
 On the sky's dome, as on a bell,
 Its echo struck the world's great hour.

That fateful echo is not dumb :
 The nations listening to its sound
 Wait, from a century's vantage-ground,
 The holier triumphs yet to come,—

30

The bridal time of Law and Love,
 The gladness of the world's release,
 When, war-sick, at the feet of Peace
 The hawk shall nestle with the dove !—

The golden age of brotherhood
 Unknown to other rivalries
 Than of the mild humanities,
 And gracious interchange of good,

40

When closer strand shall lean to strand,
 Till meet, beneath saluting flags,
 The eagle of our mountain-crag,
 The lion of our Motherland !

CENTENNIAL HYMN

Written for the opening of the International Exhibition,
Philadelphia, May 10, 1876.

I.

OUR fathers' God ! from out whose hand
The centuries fall like grains of sand,
We meet to-day, united, free,
And loyal to our land and Thee,
To thank Thee for the era done,
And trust Thee for the opening one.

II.

Here, where of old, by Thy design,
The fathers spake that word of Thine
Whose echo is the glad refrain
Of rended bolt and falling chain,
To grace our festal time, from all
The zones of earth our guests we call.

10

III.

Be with us while the New World greets
The Old World thronging all its streets,
Unveiling all the triumphs won
By art or toil beneath the sun;
And unto common good ordain
This rivalry of hand and brain.

IV.

Thou, who hast here in concord furled
The war flags of a gathered world,
Beneath our Western skies fulfil
The Orient's mission of good-will,
And, freighted with love's Golden Fleece,
Send back its Argonauts of peace.

20

V.

For art and labour met in truce,
 For beauty made the bride of use,
 We thank Thee; but, withal, we crave
 The austere virtues strong to save,
 The honour proof to place or gold,
 The manhood never bought nor sold !

30

VI.

Oh make Thou us, through centuries long,
 In peace secure, in justice strong;
 Around our gift of freedom draw
 The safeguards of Thy righteous law:
 And, cast in some diviner mould,
 Let the new cycle shame the old !

AT SCHOOL-CLOSE

BOWDOIN STREET, BOSTON, 1877.

THE end has come, as come it must
 To all things; in these sweet June days
 The teacher and the scholar trust
 Their parting feet to separate ways.

They part: but in the years to be
 Shall pleasant memories cling to each,
 As shells bear inland from the sea
 The murmur of the rhythmic beach.

One knew the joy the sculptor knows
 When, plastic to his lightest touch,
 His clay-wrought model slowly grows
 To that fine grace desired so much.

10

So daily grew before her eyes
 The living shapes whereon she wrought,
 Strong, tender, innocently wise,
 The child's heart with the woman's thought.

And one shall never quite forget
The voice that called from dream and play,
The firm but kindly hand that set
Her feet in learning's pleasant way,— 20

The joy of Undine soul-possessed,
The wakening sense, the strange delight
That swelled the fabled statue's breast
And filled its clouded eyes with sight !

O Youth and Beauty, loved of all !
Ye pass from girlhood's gate of dreams;
In broader ways your footsteps fall,
Ye test the truth of all that seems.

Her little realm the teacher leaves,
She breaks her wand of power apart, 30
While, for your love and trust, she gives
The warm thanks of a grateful heart.

Hers is the sober summer noon
Contrasted with your morn of spring,
The waning with the waxing moon,
The folded with the outspread wing.

Across the distance of the years
She sends her God-speed back to you;
She has no thought of doubts or fears:
Be but yourselves, be pure, be true, 40

And prompt in duty: heed the deep,
Low voice of conscience; through the ill
And discord round about you, keep
Your faith in human nature still.

Be gentle: unto griefs and needs,
Be pitiful as woman should,
And, spite of all the lies of creeds,
Hold fast the truth that God is good.

Give and receive; go forth and bless
 The world that needs the hand and heart 50
 Of Martha's helpful carefulness
 No less than Mary's better part.

So shall the stream of time flow by
 And leave each year a richer good,
 And matron loveliness outvie
 The nameless charm of maidenhood.

And, when the world shall link your names
 With gracious lives and manners fine,
 The teacher shall assert her claims,
 And proudly whisper. " These were mine !" 60

HYMN OF THE CHILDREN

Sung at the anniversary of the Children's Mission, Boston, 1878.

THINE are all the gifts, O God !
 Thine the broken bread ;
 Let the naked feet be shod,
 And the starving fed.

Let Thy children, by Thy grace,
 Give as they abound,
 Till the poor have breathing-space,
 And the lost are found.

Wiser than the miser's hoards
 Is the giver's choice; 10
 Sweeter than the song of birds
 Is the thankful voice.

Welcome smiles on faces sad
 As the flowers of spring;
 Let the tender hearts be glad
 With the joy they bring.

Happier for their pity's sake
Make their sports and plays,
And from lips of childhood take
Thy perfected praise !

20

THE REUNION

Read September 10, 1885, to the surviving students of Haverhill Academy in 1827-1830.

THE gulf of seven and fifty years
We stretch our welcoming hands across ;
The distance but a pebble's toss
Between us and our youth appears.

For in life's school we linger on
The remnant of a once full list ;
Conning our lessons, undismissed,
With faces to the setting sun.

And some have gone the unknown way,
And some await the call to rest ;
Who knoweth whether it is best
For those who went or those who stay ?

10

And yet despite of loss and ill,
If faith and love and hope remain,
Our length of days is not in vain,
And life is well worth living still.

Still to a gracious Providence
The thanks of grateful hearts are due,
For blessings when our lives were new,
For all the good vouchsafed us since.

20

The pain that spared us sorer hurt,
The wish denied, the purpose crossed,
And pleasure's fond occasions lost,
Were mercies to our small desert.

'Tis something that we wander back.
Grey pilgrims, to our ancient ways,
And tender memories of old days
Walk with us by the Merrimac;

That even in life's afternoon
A sense of youth comes back again, 30
As through this cool September rain
The still green woodlands dream of June.

The eyes grown dim to present things
Have keener sight for bygone years,
And sweet and clear, in deafening ears,
The bird that sang at morning sings.

Dear comrades, scattered wide and far,
Send from their homes their kindly word,
And dearer ones, unseen, unheard.
Smile on us from some heavenly star. 40

For life and death with God are one,
Unchanged by seeming change His care
And love are round us here and there;
He breaks no thread His hand has spun.

Soul touches soul, the muster-roll
Of life eternal has no gaps;
And after half a century's lapse
Our school-day ranks are closed and whole.

Hail and farewell! We go our way;
Where shadows end, we trust in light; 50
The star that ushers in the night
Is herald also of the day!

THE TENT ON THE BEACH

THE WRECK OF RIVERMOUTH

RIVERMOUTH Rocks are fair to see,
By dawn or sunset shone across,
When the ebb of the sea has left them free,
To dry their fringes of gold-green moss:
For there the river comes winding down,
From salt sea-meadows and uplands brown,
And waves on the outer rocks afoam
Shout to its waters, "Welcome home!"

And fair are the sunny isles in view
East of the grisly Head of the Boar, 10
And Agamenticus lifts its blue
Disk of a cloud the woodlands o'er;
And southerly, when the tide is down,
'Twixt white sea-waves and sand-hills brown,
The beach-birds dance and the grey gulls wheel
Over a floor of burnished steel.

Once, in the old Colonial days,
Two hundred years ago and more,
A boat sailed down through the winding ways
Of Hampton River to that low shore, 20
Full of a goodly company
Sailing out on the summer sea,
Veering to catch the land-breeze light,
With the Boar to left and the Rocks to right.

In Hampton meadows, where mowers laid
Their scythes to the swaths of salted grass,
“ Ah, well-a-day ! our hay must be made ! ”

A young man sighed, who saw them pass.
Loud laughed his fellows to see him stand
Whetting his scythe with a listless hand, 30
Hearing a voice in a far-off song,
Watching a white hand beckoning long.

“ Fie on the witch ! ” cried a merry girl,
As they rounded the point where Goody Cole
Sat by her door with her wheel atwirl,

A bent and blear-eyed poor old soul.
“ Oho ! ” she muttered, “ ye’re brave to-day !
But I hear the little waves laugh and say,
‘ The broth will be cold that waits at home ;
For it’s one to go, but another to come ! ’ ” 40

“ She’s cursed,” said the skipper ; “ speak her fair :
I’m scary always to see her shake
Her wicked head, with its wild grey hair,

And nose like a hawk, and eyes like a snake.”
But merrily still, with laugh and shout,
From Hampton River the boat sailed out,
Till the huts and the flakes on Star seemed nigh.
And they lost the scent of the pines of Rye.

They dropped their lines in the lazy tide,
Drawing up haddock and mottled cod ; 50
They saw not the Shadow that walked beside.
They heard not the feet with silence shod.
But thicker and thicker a hot mist grew,
Shot by the lightnings through and through ;
And muffled growls, like the growl of a beast,
Ran along the sky from west to east.

Then the skipper looked from the darkening sea
Up to the dimmed and wading sun ;
But he spake like a brave man cheerily.
“ Yet there is time for our homeward run.” 60

Veering and tacking, they backward wore;
And just as a breath from the woods ashore
Blew out to whisper of danger past,
The wrath of the storm came down at last !

The skipper hauled at the heavy sail :

“ God be our help ! ” he only cried,
As the roaring gale, like the stroke of a flail,
Smote the boat on its starboard side.

The Shoalsmen looked, but saw alone
Dark films of rain-cloud slantwise blown.
Wild rocks lit up by the lightning’s glare,
The strife and torment of sea and air.

70

Goody Cole looked out from her door :

The Isles of Shoals were drowned and gone,
Scarcely she saw the Head of the Boar
Toss the foam from tusks of stone.

She clasped her hands with a grip of pain,
The tear on her cheek was not of rain :

“ They are lost,” she muttered, “ boat and crew !
Lord, forgive me ! my words were true ! ”

80

Suddenly seaward swept the squall ;

The low sun smote through cloudy rack ;

The Shoals stood clear in the light, and all

The trend of the coast lay hard and black.

But far and wide as eye could reach,

No life was seen upon wave or beach ;

The boat that went out at morning never

Sailed back again into Hampton River.

O mower, lean on thy bended snath,

Look from the meadows green and low :
The wind of the sea is a waft of death,

90

.

The waves are singing a song of woe !

By silent river, by moaning sea,

Long and vain shall thy watching be :

Never again shall the sweet voice call,

Never the white hand rise and fall !

O Rivermouth Rocks, how sad a sight
Ye saw in the light of breaking day !
Dead faces looking up cold and white
From sand and seaweed where they lay. 100
The mad old witch-wife wailed and wept,
And cursed the tide as it backward crept:
"Crawl back, crawl back, blue water-snake !
Leave your dead for the hearts that break !"

Solemn it was in that old day
In Hampton town and its log-built church,
Where side by side the coffins lay
And the mourners stood in aisle and porch. 110
In the singing-seats young eyes were dim,
The voices faltered that raised the hymn,
And Father Dalton, grave and stern,
Sobbed through his prayer and wept in turn.

But his ancient colleague did not pray ;
Under the weight of his fourscore years
He stood apart with the iron-grey
Of his strong brows knitted to hide his tears ;
And a fair-faced woman of doubtful fame,
Linking her own with his honoured name,
Subtle as sin, at his side withstood
The felt reproach of her neighbourhood. 120

Apart with them, like them forbid,
Old Goody Cole looked drearily round,
As, two by two, with their faces hid,
The mourners walked to the burying-ground.
She let the staff from her clasped hands fall :
"Lord, forgive us ! we're sinners all !"
And the voice of the old man answered her :
"Amen !" said Father Bachiler.

So, as I sat upon Appledore
In the calm of a closing summer day, 130
And the broken lines of Hampton shore
In purple mist of cloudland lay,

The Rivermouth Rocks their story told;
And waves aglow with sunset gold,
Rising and breaking in steady chime,
Beat the rhythm and kept the time.

And the sunset paled, and warmed once more
With a softer, tenderer after-glow;
In the east was moon-rise, with boats off-shore
And sails in the distance drifting slow. 140
The beacon glimmered from Portsmouth bar,
The White Isle kindled its great red star;
And life and death in my old-time lay
Mingled in peace like the night and day!

THE GRAVE BY THE LAKE

WHERE the Great Lake's sunny smiles
Dimple round its hundred isles,
And the mountain's granite ledge
Cleaves the water like a wedge,
Ringed about with smooth, grey stones,
Rest the giant's mighty bones.

Close beside, in shade and gleam,
Laughs and ripples Melvin stream;
Melvin water, mountain-born,
All fair flowers its banks adorn; 10
All the woodland voices meet,
Mingling with its murmurs sweet.

Over lowlands forest-grown,
Over waters island-strown,
Over silver-sanded beach,
Leaf-locked bay and misty reach,
Melvin stream and burial-heap,
Watch and ward the mountains keep.

Who that Titan cromlech fills ?
 Forest-kaiser, lord o' the hills ?
 Knight who on the birchen tree
 Carved his savage heraldry ?
 Priest o' the pine-wood temples dim,
 Prophet, sage, or wizard grim ?

20

Rugged type of primal man,
 Grim utilitarian,
 Loving woods for hunt and prowl,
 Lake and hill for fish and fowl,
 As the brown bear blind and dull
 To the grand and beautiful :

30

Not for him the lesson drawn
 From the mountains smit with dawn.
 Star-rise, moon-rise, flowers of May,
 Sunset's purple bloom of day,—
 Took his life no hue from thence,
 Poor amid such affluence ?

Haply unto hill and tree
 All too near akin was he:
 Unto him who stands afar
 Nature's marvels greatest are ;
 Who the mountain purple seeks
 Must not climb the higher peaks.

40

Yet who knows, in winter tramp,
 Or the midnight of the camp,
 What revealings faint and far,
 Stealing down from moon and star,
 Kindled in that human clod
 Thought of destiny and God ?

Stateliest forest patriarch,
 Grand in robes of skin and bark,
 What sepulchral mysteries,
 What weird funeral-rites, were his ?
 What sharp wail, what drear lament,
 Back scared wolf and eagle sent ?

50

Now, whate'er he may have been,
Low he lies as other men;
On his mound the partridge drums,
There the noisy blue-jay comes;
Rank nor name nor pomp has he
In the grave's democracy. 60

Part thy blue lips, Northern lake !
Moss-grown rocks, your silence break !
Tell the tale, thou ancient tree !
Thou, too, slide-worn Ossipee !
Speak, and tell us how and when
Lived and died this king of men !

Wordless moans the ancient pine;
Lake and mountain give no sign;
Vain to trace this ring of stones;
Vain the search of crumbling bones: 70
Deepest of all mysteries,
And the saddest, silence is.

Nameless, noteless, clay with clay
Mingles slowly day by day;
But somewhere, for good or ill,
That dark soul is living still;
Somewhere yet that atom's force
Moves the light-poised universe.

Strange that on his burial-sod
Harebells bloom, and golden-rod, 80
While the soul's dark horoscope
Holds no starry sign of hope !
Is the Unseen with sight at odds ?
Nature's pity more than God's ?

Thus I mused by Melvin's side,
While the summer eventide
Made the woods and inland sea
And the mountains mystery;
And the hush of earth and air
Seemed the pause before a prayer,— 90

Prayer for him, for all who rest,
 Mother Earth, upon thy breast,—
 Lapped on Christian turf, or hid
 In rock-cave or pyramid:
 All who sleep, as all who live,
 Well may need the prayer, "Forgive!"

Desert-smothered caravan,
 Knee-deep dust that once was man,
 Battle-trenches ghastly piled,
 Ocean-floors with white bones tiled, 100
 Crowded tomb and mounded sod,
 Dumbly crave that prayer to God.

Oh, the generations old
 Over whom no church-bells tolled,
 Christless, lifting up blind eyes
 To the silence of the skies!
 For the innumerable dead
 Is my soul disquieted.

Where be now these silent hosts?
 Where the camping-ground of ghosts? 110
 Where the spectral conscripts led
 To the white tents of the dead?
 What strange shore or chartless sea
 Holds the awful mystery?

Then the warm sky stooped to make
 Double sunset in the lake;
 While above I saw with it,
 Range on range, the mountains lit;
 And the calm and splendour stole
 Like an answer to my soul. 120

Hear'st thou, O of little faith,
 What to thee the mountain saith,
 What is whispered by the trees?—
 "Cast on God thy care for these;
 Trust Him, if thy sight be dim:
 Doubt for them is doubt of Him.

“ Blind must be their close-shut eyes
Where like night the sunshine lies,
Fiery-linked the self-forged chain
Binding ever sin to pain, 130
Strong their prison-house of will,
But without He waiteth still.

“ Not with hatred’s undertow
Doth the Love Eternal flow;
Every chain that spirits wear
Crumbles in the breath of prayer;
And the penitent’s desire
Opens every gate of fire.

“ Still Thy love, O Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach these souls in prison ! 140
Through all depths of sin and loss
Drops the plummet of Thy cross !
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that cross could sound !”

Therefore well may Nature keep
Equal faith with all who sleep,
Set her watch of hills around
Christian grave and heathen mound,
And to cairn and kirkyard send
Summer’s flowery dividend. 150

Keep, O pleasant Melvin stream,
Thy sweet laugh in shade and gleam !
On the Indian’s grassy tomb
Swing, O flowers, your bells of bloom !
Deep below, as high above,
Sweeps the circle of God’s love.

THE CABLE HYMN

O LONELY bay of Trinity,
 O dreary shores, give ear !
 Lean down unto the white-lipped sea
 The voice of God to hear !

From world to world His couriers fly,
 Thought-winged and shod with fire ;
 The angel of His stormy sky
 Rides down the sunken wire.

What saith the herald of the Lord ?
 " The world's long strife is done ;
 Close wedded by that mystic cord,
 Its continents are one.

10

" And one in heart, as one in blood,
 Shall all her peoples be ;
 The hands of human brotherhood
 Are clasped beneath the sea.

" Through Orient seas, o'er Afric's plain
 And Asian mountains borne,
 The vigour of the Northern brain
 Shall nerve the world outworn.

20

" From clime to clime, from shore to shore,
 Shall thrill the magic thread ;
 The new Prometheus steals once more
 The fire that wakes the dead."

Throb on, strong pulse of thunder ! beat
 From answering beach to beach ;
 Fuse nations in thy kindly heat,
 And melt the chains of each !

Wild terror of the sky above,
 Glide tamed and dumb below !
 Bear gently, Ocean's carrier-dove,
 Thy errands to and fro.

30

Weave on, swift shuttle of the Lord,
Beneath the deep so far,
The bridal robe of earth's accord,
The funeral shroud of war !

For lo ! the fall of Ocean's wall
Space mocked and time outrun ;
And round the world the thought of all
Is as the thought of one !

The poles unite, the zones agree,
The tongues of striving cease;
As on the Sea of Galilee
The Christ is whispering, Peace!

1858.

ABRAHAM DAVENPORT

The famous Dark Day of New England, May 19, 1780, was a physical puzzle for many years to our ancestors, but its occurrence brought something more than philosophical speculation into the minds of those who passed through it. The incident of Colonel Abraham Davenport's sturdy protest is a matter of history.

In the old days (a custom laid aside
With breeches and cocked hats) the people sent
Their wisest men to make the public laws.
And so, from a brown homestead, where the Sound
Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas,
Waved over by the woods of Rippowams,
And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil deaths,
Stamford sent up to the councils of the State
Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport.

'Twas on a May-day of the far old year
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring,
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
A horror of great darkness, like the night
In day of which the Norland sagas tell,—

The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky
Was black with ominous clouds, save where its rim
Was fringed with a dull glow, like that which climbs
The crater's sides from the red hell below.
Birds ceased to sing, and all the barnyard fowls 20
Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars
Low'd, and looked homeward; bats on leathern wings
Flitted abroad; the sounds of labour died;
Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew sharp
To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter
The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ
Might look from the rent clouds, not as He looked
A loving guest at Bethany, but stern
As Justice and inexorable Law.

Meanwhile in the old State House, dim as ghosts,
Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut, 31
Trembling beneath their legislative robes.
"It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,"
Some said; and then, as if with one accord,
All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.
He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice
The intolerable hush. "This well may be
The Day of Judgement which the world awaits;
But be it so or not, I only know
My present duty, and my Lord's command 40
To occupy till He come. So at the post
Where He hath set me in His providence,
I choose, for one, to meet Him face to face,—
No faithless servant frightened from my task,
But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls;
And therefore, with all reverence, I would say.
Let God do His work, we will see to ours.
Bring in the candles." And they brought them in.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker read,
Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands, 50
An act to amend an act to regulate
The shad and alewife fisheries. Whereupon
Wisely and well spake Abraham Davenport.

Straight to the question, with no figures of speech
Save the ten Arab signs, yet not without
The shrewd dry humour natural to the man:
His awe-struck colleagues listening all the while,
Between the pauses of his argument,
To hear the thunder of the wrath of God
Break from the hollow trumpet of the cloud.

60

And there he stands in memory to this day,
Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen
Against the background of unnatural dark,
A witness to the ages as they pass,
That simple duty hath no place for fear.

1866.

ANTI-SLAVERY POEMS

TO WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

CHAMPION of those who groan beneath
Oppression's iron hand:
In view of penury, hate, and death,
I see thee fearless stand.
Still bearing up thy lofty brow,
In the steadfast strength of truth,
In manhood sealing well the vow
And promise of thy youth.

Go on, for thou hast chosen well;
On in the strength of God !
Long as one human heart shall swell
Beneath the tyrant's rod.
Speak in a slumbering nation's ear,
As thou hast ever spoken,
Until the dead in sin shall hear,
The fetter's link be broken !

10

I love thee with a brother's love,
I feel my pulses thrill,
To mark thy spirit soar above
The cloud of human ill.
My heart hath leaped to answer thine,
And echo back thy words,
As leaps the warrior's at the shine
And flash of kindred swords !

20

They tell me thou art rash and vain,
A searcher after fame;
That thou art striving but to gain
A long-enduring name;

That thou hast nerved the Afric's hand
 And steeled the Afric's heart, 30
 To shake aloft his vengeful brand,
 And rend his chain apart.

Have I not known thee well, and read
 Thy mighty purpose long ?
 And watched the trials which have made
 Thy human spirit strong ?
 And shall the slanderer's demon breath
 Avail with one like me,
 To dim the sunshine of my faith
 And earnest trust in thee ? 40

Go on, the dagger's point may glare
 Amid thy pathway's gloom;
 The fate which sternly threatens there
 Is glorious martyrdom !
 Then onward with a martyr's zeal;
 And wait thy sure reward
 When man to man no more shall kneel,
 And God alone be Lord !

1832.

THE SLAVE-SHIPS ¹

" That fatal, that perfidious bark,
 Built 't' the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,"
 MILTON'S *Lycidas*.

" ALL ready ?" cried the captain;
 " Ay, ay !" the seamen said;
 " Heave up the worthless lubbers, —
 'The dying and the dead.'"
 Up from the slave-ship's prison
 Fierce, bearded heads were thrust:
 " Now let the sharks look to it, —
 'Toss up the dead ones first !"

¹ See note at end of book,

Corpse after corpse came up,—
 Death had been busy there;
 Where every blow is mercy,
 Why should the spoiler spare?
 Corpse after corpse they cast
 Sullenly from the ship,
 Yet bloody with the traces
 Of fetter-link and whip.

10

Gloomily stood the captain,
 With his arms upon his breast,
 With his cold brow sternly knotted,
 And his iron lip compressed.
 "Are all the dead dogs over?"
 Growled through that matted lip;
 "The blind ones are no better,
 Let's lighten the good ship."

20

Hark! from the ship's dark bosom,
 The very sounds of hell!
 The ringing clank of iron,
 The maniac's short, sharp yell!
 The hoarse, low curse, throat-stifled;
 The starving infant's moan,
 The horror of a breaking heart
 Poured through a mother's groan.

30

Up from that loathsome prison
 The stricken blind ones came:
 Below, had all been darkness,
 Above, was still the same.
 Yet the holy breath of heaven
 Was sweetly breathing there,
 And the heated brow of fever
 Cooled in the soft sea air.

40

"Overboard with them, shipmates!"
 Cutlass and dirk were plied;
 Fettered and blind, one after one,
 Plunged down the vessel's side.

The sabre smote above,
 Beneath, the lean shark lay,
 Waiting with wide and bloody jaw
 His quick and human prey.

God of the earth ! what cries
 Rang upward unto Thee ? 50
 Voices of agony and blood,
 From ship-deck and from sea.
 The last dull plunge was heard,
 The last wave caught its stain,
 And the unsated shark looked up
 For human hearts in vain.

* * * *

Red glowed the western waters,
 The setting sun was there,
 Scattering alike on wave and cloud
 His fiery mesh of hair. 60
 Amidst a group in blindness,
 A solitary eye
 Gazed, from the burdened slaver's deck,
 Into that burning sky.

"A storm," spoke out the gazer,
 "Is gathering and at hand;
 Curse on 't. I'd give my other eye
 For one firm rood of land."
 And then he laughed, but only
 His echoed laugh replied. 70
 For the blinded and the suffering
 Alone were at his side.

Night settled on the waters,
 And on a stormy heaven,
 While fiercely on that lone ship's track
 The thunder-gust was driven.
 "A sail!—thank God, a sail!"
 And as the helmsman spoke,
 Up through the stormy murmur
 A shout of gladness broke. 80

Down came the stranger vessel,
 Unheeding on her way,
 So near that on the slaver's deck
 Fell off her driven spray.
 "Ho ! for the love of mercy,
 We're perishing and blind !"
 A wail of utter agony
 Came back upon the wind :

" Help us ! for we are stricken
 With blindness every one ;
 Ten days we've floated fearfully,
 Unnoting star or sun.
 Our ship's the slaver Leon,—
 We've but a score on board ;
 Our slaves are all gone over,—
 Help, for the love of God !"

90

On livid brows of agony
 The broad red lightning shone ;
 But the roar of wind and thunder
 Stifled the answering groan ;
 Wailed from the broken waters
 A last despairing cry,
 As, kindling in the stormy light,
 The stranger ship went by.

100

* * * * *

In the sunny Guadaloupe
 A dark-hulled vessel lay,
 With a crew who noted never
 The nightfall or the day.
 The blossom of the orange
 Was white by every stream,
 And tropic leaf, and flower, and bird
 Were in the warm sunbeam.

110

And the sky was bright as ever,
 And the moonlight slept as well,
 On the palm-trees by the hillside,
 And the streamlet of the dell :

And the glances of the Creole
 Were still as archly deep,
 And her smiles as full as ever
 Of passion and of sleep.

120

But vain were bird and blossom,
 The green earth and the sky,
 And the smile of human faces,
 To the slaver's darkened eye;
 At the breaking of the morning,
 At the star-lit evening time,
 O'er a world of light and beauty
 Fell the blackness of his crime.

1834.

EXPOSTULATION

OUR fellow-countrymen in chains !
 Slaves, in a land of light and law !
 Slaves, crouching on the very plains
 Where rolled the storm of Freedom's war !
 A groan from Eutaw's haunted wood,
 A wail where Camden's martyrs fell,
 By every shrine of patriot blood,
 From Moultrie's wall and Jasper's well !

By storied hill and hallowed grot,
 By mossy wood and marshy glen,
 Whence rang of old the rifle-shot,
 And hurrying shout of Marion's men !
 The groan of breaking hearts is there,
 The falling lash, the fetter's clank !
 Slaves, slaves are breathing in that air
 Which old De Kalb and Sumter drank !

10

What ho ! our countrymen in chains !
 The whip on woman's shrinking flesh !
 Our soil yet reddening with the stains
 Caught from her scourging, warm and fresh !

19

What ! mothers from their children riven !
 What ! God's own image bought and sold !
 Americans to market driven,
 And bartered as the brute for gold !

Speak ! shall their agony of prayer
 Come thrilling to our hearts in vain ?
 To us whose fathers scorned to bear
 The paltry menace of a chain ;
 To us, whose boast is loud and long
 Of holy Liberty and Light ; 30
 Say, shall these writhing slaves of Wrong
 Plead vainly for their plundered Right ?

What ! shall we send, with lavish breath,
 Our sympathies across the wave,
 Where Manhood, on the field of death,
 Strikes for his freedom or a grave ?
 Shall prayers go up, and hymns be sung
 For Greece, the Moslem fetter spurning,
 And millions hail with pen and tongue
 Our light on all her altars burning ? 40

Shall Belgium feel, and gallant France,
 By Vendome's pile and Schoenbrun's wall,
 And Poland, gasping on her lance,
 The impulse of our cheering call ?
 And shall the slave, beneath our eye,
 Clank o'er our fields his hateful chain ?
 And toss his fettered arms on high,
 And groan for Freedom's gift, in vain ?

Oh, say, shall Prussia's banner be
 A refuge for the stricken slave ? 50
 And shall the Russian serf go free
 By Baikal's lake and Neva's wave ?
 And shall the wintry-bosomed Dane
 Relax the iron hand of pride,
 And bid his bondmen cast the chain
 From fettered soul and limb aside ?

Shall every flap of England's flag
 Proclaim that all around are free,
 From farthest Ind to each blue crag
 That beetles o'er the Western Sea ? 60
 And shall we scoff at Europe's kings,
 When Freedom's fire is dim with us,
 And round our country's altar clings
 The damning shade of Slavery's curse ?

Go, let us ask of Constantine
 To loose his grasp on Poland's throat ;
 And beg the lord of Mahmoud's line
 To spare the struggling Suliote ;
 Will not the scorching answer come
 From turbaned Turk, and scornful Russ : 70
 " Go, loose your fettered slaves at home,
 Then turn, and ask the like of us ! "

Just God ! and shall we calmly rest,
 The Christian's scorn, the heathen's mirth,
 Content to live the lingering jest
 And by-word of a mocking Earth ?
 Shall our own glorious land retain
 That curse which Europe scorns to bear ?
 Shall our own brethren drag the chain
 Which not even Russia's menials wear ? 80

Up, then, in Freedom's manly part,
 From greybeard eld to fiery youth,
 And on the nation's naked heart
 Scatter the living coals of Truth !
 Up ! while ye slumber, deeper yet
 The shadow of our fame is growing !
 Up ! while ye pause, our sun may set
 In blood around our altars flowing !

Oh ! rouse ye, ere the storm comes forth,
 The gathered wrath of God and man, 90
 Like that which wasted Egypt's earth,
 When hail and fire above it ran.

Hear ye no warnings in the air ?
 Feel ye no earthquake underneath ?
 Up, up ! why will ye slumber where
 The sleeper only wakes in death ?

Rise now for Freedom ! not in strife
 Like that your sterner fathers saw,
 The awful waste of human life,
 The glory and the guilt of war : 100
 But break the chain, the yoke remove,
 And smite to earth Oppression's rod,
 With those mild arms of Truth and Love,
 Made mighty through the living God !

Down let the shrine of Moloch sink,
 And leave no traces where it stood ;
 Nor longer let its idol drink
 His daily cup of human blood ;
 But rear another altar there,
 To Truth and Love and Mercy given, 110
 And Freedom's gift, and Freedom's prayer,
 Shall call an answer down from Heaven !

1834.

HYMN

Written for the meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society, at Chatham Street Chapel, New York, held on the 4th of the seventh month, 1834.

O THOU, whose presence went before
 Our fathers in their weary way,
 As with Thy chosen moved of yore
 The fire by night, the cloud by day !

When from each temple of the free,
 A nation's song ascends to Heaven,
 Most Holy Father ! unto Thee
 May not our humble prayer be given ?

Thy children all, though hue and form
Are varied in Thine own good will, 10
With Thy own holy breathings warm,
And fashioned in Thine image still.

We thank Thee, Father ! hill and plain
Around us wave their fruits once more,
And clustered vine, and blossomed grain,
Are bending round each cottage door.

And peace is here ; and hope and love
Are round us as a mantle thrown,
And unto Thee, supreme above,
The knee of prayer is bowed alone. 20

But oh, for those this day can bring,
As unto us, no joyful thrill ;
For those who, under Freedom's wing,
Are bound in Slavery's fetters still :

For those to whom Thy written word
Of light and love is never given ;
For those whose ears have never heard
The promise and the hope of heaven !

For broken heart, and clouded mind,
Whereon no human mercies fall ; 30
Oh, be Thy gracious love inclined,
Who, as a Father, pitiest all !

And grant, O Father ! that the time
Of Earth's deliverance may be near,
When every land and tongue and clime
The message of Thy love shall hear ;

When, smitten as with fire from heaven,
The captive's chain shall sink in dust,
And to his fettered soul be given
The glorious freedom of the just ! 40

THE FAREWELL

OF A VIRGINIA SLAVE MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTERS SOLD
INTO SOUTHERN BONDAGE.

GONE, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,
Where the noisome insect stings,
Where the fever demon strews
Poison with the falling dews,
Where the sickly sunbeams glare
Through the hot and misty air;
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone, 10
From Virginia's hills and waters:
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
There no mother's eye is near them,
There no mother's ear can hear them;
Never, when the torturing lash
Seams their back with many a gash,
Shall a mother's kindness bless them,
Or a mother's arms caress them. 20
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
Oh, when weary, sad, and slow,
From the fields at night they go,
Faint with toil, and racked with pain,
To their cheerless homes again, 30
There no brother's voice shall greet them;
There no father's welcome meet them.

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
From the tree whose shadow lay
On their childhood's place of play; 40
From the cool spring where they drank;
Rock, and hill, and rivulet bank;
From the solemn house of prayer,
And the holy counsels there;
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone; 50
Toiling through the weary day,
And at night the spoiler's prey.
Oh, that they had earlier died,
Sleeping calmly, side by side,
Where the tyrant's power is o'er,
And the fetter galls no more !
Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
From Virginia's hills and waters;
Woe is me, my stolen daughters ! 60

Gone, gone,—sold and gone.
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.
By the holy love He beareth;
By the bruised reed He spareth;
Oh, may He, to whom alone
All their cruel wrongs are known,
Still their hope and refuge prove,
With a more than mother's love.

Gone, gone,—sold and gone,
 To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
 From Virginia's hills and waters;
 Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

70

1838.

THE CHRISTIAN SLAVE

In a publication of L. F. Tasistro—*Random Shots and Southern Breezes*—is a description of a slave auction at New Orleans, at which the auctioneer recommended the woman on the stand as "A GOOD CHRISTIAN !" It was not uncommon to see advertisements of slaves for sale, in which they were described as pious or as members of the church. In one advertisement a slave was noted as "a Baptist preacher."

A CHRISTIAN ! going, gone !
 Who bids for God's own image ? for His grace,
 Which that poor victim of the market-place
 Hath in her suffering won ?

My God ! can such things be ?
 Hast Thou not said that whatsoever is done
 Unto Thy weakest and Thy humblest one
 Is even done to Thee ?

In that sad victim, then,
 Child of Thy pitying love, I see Thee stand ;
 Once more the jest-word of a mocking band,
 Bound, sold, and scourged again !

10

A Christian up for sale !
 Wet with her blood your whips, o'ertask her frame,
 Make her life loathsome with your wrong and shame,
 Her patience shall not fail !

A heathen hand might deal
 Back on your heads the gathered wrong of years :
 But her low, broken prayer and nightly tears,
 Ye neither heed nor feel.

20

Con well thy lesson o'er,
Thou prudent teacher, tell the toiling slave
No dangerous tale of Him who came to save
The outcast and the poor.

But wisely shut the ray
Of God's free Gospel from her simple heart,
And to her darkened mind alone impart
One stern command, Obey !

So shalt thou deftly raise
The market price of human flesh ; and while 30
On thee, their pampered guest, the planters smile,
Thy church shall praise.

Grave, reverend men shall tell
From Northern pulpits how thy work was blest,
While in that vile South Sodom first and best,
Thy poor disciples sell.

Oh, shame ! the Moslem thrall,
Who, with his master, to the Prophet kneels,
While turning to the sacred Kebla feels
His fetters break and fall. 40

Cheers for the turbaned Bey
Of robber-peopled Tunis ! he hath torn
The dark slave-dungeons open, and hath borne
Their inmates into day :

But our poor slave in vain
Turns to the Christian shrine his aching eyes ;
Its rites will only swell his market price,
And rivet on his chain.

God of all right ! how long
Shall priestly robbers at Thine altar stand,
Lifting in prayer to Thee the bloody hand
And haughty brow of wrong ? 50

Oh, from the fields of cane,
 From the low rice-swamp, from the trader's cell;
 From the black slave-ship's foul and loathsome hell,
 And coffin's weary chain;

Hoarse, horrible, and strong,
 Rises to Heaven that agonizing cry,
 Filling the arches of the hollow sky,
 How long, O God, how long ?

60

1843.

LINES

FROM A LETTER TO A YOUNG CLERICAL FRIEND.

A STRENGTH Thy service cannot tire,
 A faith which doubt can never dim,
 A heart of love, a lip of fire,
 O Freedom's God ! be Thou to him !

Speak through him words of power and fear,
 As through Thy prophet bards of old,
 And let a scornful people hear
 Once more Thy Sinai-thunders rolled.

For lying lips Thy blessing seek,
 And hands of blood are raised to Thee,
 And on Thy children, crushed and weak,
 The oppressor plants his kneeling knee.

10

Let then, O God ! Thy servant dare
 Thy truth in all its power to tell,
 Unmask the priestly thieves, and tear
 The Bible from the grasp of hell !

From hollow rite and narrow span
 Of law and sect by Thee released,
 Oh, teach him that the Christian man
 Is holier than the Jewish priest.

20

Chase back the shadows, grey and old,
 Of the dead ages, from his way,
 And let his hopeful eyes behold
 The dawn of Thy millennial day;

That day when fettered limb and mind
 Shall know the truth which maketh free,
 And he alone who loves his kind
 Shall, childlike, claim the love of Thee !

SONG OF SLAVES IN THE DESERT

WHERE are we going ? where are we going,
 Where are we going, Rubee ?
 Lord of peoples, lord of lands,
 Look across these shining sands,
 Through the furnace of the noon,
 Through the white light of the moon.
 Strong the Ghiblee wind is blowing,
 Strange and large the world is growing !
 Speak and tell us where we are going,
 Where are we going, Rubee ?

10

Bornou land was rich and good,
 Wells of water, fields of food,
 Dourra fields, and bloom of bean,
 And the palm-tree cool and green :
 Bornou land we see no longer,
 Here we thirst and here we hunger,
 Here the Moor-man smites in anger :
 Where are we going, Rubee ?

When we went from Bornou land,
 We were like the leaves and sand,
 We were many, we are few ;
 Life has one, and death has two :
 Whitened bones our path are showing,
 Thou All-seeing, thou All-knowing !
 Hear us, tell us, where are we going,
 Where are we going, Rubee ?

20

Moons of marches from our eyes
 Bornou land behind us lies ;
 Stranger round us day by day
 Bends the desert circle grey ; 30
 Wild the waves of sand are flowing,
 Hot the winds above them blowing,—
 Lord of all things ! where are we going ?
 Where are we going, Rubee ?

We are weak, but Thou art strong ;
 Short our lives, but Thine is long ;
 We are blind, but Thou hast eyes ;
 We are fools, but Thou art wise !
 Thou, our morrow's pathway knowing
 Through the strange world round us growing,
 Hear us, tell us where are we going, 41
 Where are we going, Rubee ?

1847.

THE CURSE OF THE CHARTER-BREAKERS

The rights and liberties affirmed by Magna Charta were deemed of such importance, in the thirteenth century, that the Bishops, twice a year, with tapers burning, and in their pontifical robes, pronounced, in the presence of the king and the representatives of the estates of England, the greater excommunication against the infringer of that instrument. The imposing ceremony took place in the great Hall of Westminster. A copy of the curse, as pronounced in 1253, declares that, "by the authority of Almighty God, and the blessed Apostles and Martyrs, and all the saints in heaven, all those who violate the English liberties, and secretly or openly, by deed, word, or counsel, do make statutes, or observe them being made, against said liberties, are accursed and sequestered from the company of heaven and the sacraments of the Holy Church."

William Penn, in his admirable political pamphlet, *England's Present Interest Considered*, alluding to the curse of the Charter-breakers, says: "I am no Roman Catholic, and little value their other curses: yet I declare I would not for the world incur this curse, as every man deservedly doth, who offers violence to the fundamental freedom thereby repeated and confirmed."

In Westminster's royal halls,
 Robed in their pontificals,
 England's ancient prelates stood
 For the people's right and good.

Closed around the waiting crowd,
 Dark and still, like winter's cloud;
 King and council, lord and knight,
 Squire and yeoman, stood in sight;

Stood to hear the priest rehearse,
 In God's name, the Church's curse, 10
 By the tapers round them lit,
 Slowly, sternly uttering it.

"Right of voice in framing laws,
 Right of peers to try each cause;
 Peasant homestead, mean and small,
 Sacred as the monarch's hall,—

"Whoso lays his hand on these,
 England's ancient liberties;
 Whoso breaks, by word or deed,
 England's vow at Runnymede; 20

"Be he Prince or belted knight,
 Whatso'er his rank or might,
 If the highest, then the worst.
 Let him live and die accursed.

"Thou, who to Thy Church hast given
 Keys alike of hell and heaven,
 Make our word and witness sure,
 Let the curse we speak endure!"

Silent, while that curse was said,
 Every bare and listening head 30
 Bowed in reverent awe, and then
 All the people said, Amen!

Seven times the bells have tolled,
 For the centuries grey and old,
 Since that stoled and mitred band
 Cursed the tyrants of their land.

Since the priesthood, like a tower,
Stood between the poor and power;
And the wronged and trodden down
Blessed the abbot's shaven crown.

40

Gone, thank God, their wizard spell,
Lost, their keys of heaven and hell;
Yet I sigh for men as bold
As those bearded priests of old.

Now too oft the priesthood wait
At the threshold of the state;
Waiting for the beck and nod
Of its power as law and God.

Fraud exults, while solemn words
Sanctify his stolen hoards;
Slavery laughs, while ghostly lips
Bless his manacles and whips.

50

Not on them the poor rely,
Not to them looks liberty,
Who with fawning falsehood cower
To the wrong, when clothed with power.

Oh, to see them meanly cling,
Round the master, round the king,
Sported with, and sold and bought,—
Pitifuller sight is not !

60

Tell me not that this must be :
God's true priest is always free ;
Free, the needed truth to speak,
Right the wronged, and raise the weak.

Not to fawn on wealth and state,
Leaving Lazarus at the gate ;
Not to peddle creeds like wares ;
Not to mutter hireling prayers ;

Nor to paint the new life's bliss
 On the sable ground of this; 70
 Golden streets for idle knave,
 Sabbath rest for weary slave !

Not for words and works like these,
 Priest of God, thy mission is ;
 But to make earth's desert glad,
 In its Eden greenness clad ;

And to level manhood bring
 Lord and peasant, serf and king ;
 And the Christ of God to find
 In the humblest of thy kind ! 80

Thine to work as well as pray,
 Clearing thorny wrongs away ;
 Plucking up the weeds of sin,
 Letting heaven's warm sunshine in ;

Watching on the hills of Faith ;
 Listening what the spirit saith,
 Of the dim-seen light afar,
 Growing like a nearing star.

God's interpreter art thou,
 To the waiting ones below ; 90
 'Twixt them and its light midway
 Heralding the better day ;

Catching gleams of temple spires,
 Hearing notes of angel choirs,
 Where, as yet unseen of them,
 Comes the New Jerusalem !

Like the seer of Patmos gazing,
 On the glory downward blazing ;
 Till upon Earth's grateful sod
 Rests the City of our God ! 100

IN THE EVIL DAYS

THE evil days have come, the poor
 Are made a prey;
 Bar up the hospitable door,
 Put out the fire-lights, point no more
 The wanderer's way.

For Pity now is crime; the chain
 Which binds our States
 Is melted at her hearth in twain,
 Is rusted by her tears' soft rain:
 Close up her gates.

10

Our Union, like a glacier stirred
 By voice below,
 Or bell of kine, or wing of bird,
 A beggar's crust, a kindly word
 May overthrow !

Poor, whispering tremblers ! yet we boast
 Our blood and name;
 Bursting its century-bolted frost,
 Each grey cairn on the Northman's coast
 Cries out for shame !

20

Oh for the open firmament,
 The prairie free,
 The desert hillside, cavern-rent,
 The Pawnee's lodge, the Arab's tent,
 The Bushman's tree !

Than web of Persian loom most rare,
 Or soft divan,
 Better the rough rock, bleak and bare,
 Or hollow tree, which man may share
 With suffering man.

30

I hear a voice: "Thus saith the Law,
 Let Love be dumb;
 Clasping her liberal hands in awe,
 Let sweet-lipped Charity withdraw
 From hearth and home."

I hear another voice: "The poor
 Are thine to feed;
 Turn not the outcast from thy door,
 Nor give to bonds and wrong once more
 Whom God hath freed."

40

Dear Lord ! between that law and Thee
 No choice remains;
 Yet not untrue to man's decree,
 Though spurning its rewards, is he
 Who bears its pains.

Not mine Sedition's trumpet-blast
 And threatening word;
 I read the lesson of the Past,
 That firm endurance wins at last
 More than the sword.

50

O clear-eyed Faith, and Patience thou
 So calm and strong !
 Lend strength to weakness, teach us how
 The sleepless eyes of God look through
 This night of wrong !

1850.

THE RENDITION

On the 2d of June, 1854, Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave from Virginia, after being under arrest for ten days in the Boston Court House, was remanded to slavery under the Fugitive Slave Act, and taken down State Street to a steamer chartered by the United States Government, under guard of United States troops and artillery, Massachusetts militia and Boston police. Public excitement ran high, a futile attempt to rescue Burns having been made during his confinement, and the streets were crowded with tens of thousands of people, of whom many came from other towns and cities of the State to witness the humiliating spectacle.

I HEARD the train's shrill whistle call,
 I saw an earnest look beseech,
 And rather by that look than speech
 My neighbour told me all.

And, as I thought of Liberty
 Marched handcuffed down that sworded street,
 The solid earth beneath my feet
 Reeled fluid as the sea.

I felt a sense of bitter loss,—
 Shame, tearless grief, and stifling wrath, 10
 And loathing fear, as if my path
 A serpent stretched across.

All love of home, all pride of place,
 All generous confidence and trust,
 Sank smothering in that deep disgust
 And anguish of disgrace.

Down on my native hills of June,
 And home's green quiet, hiding all,
 Fell sudden darkness like the fall
 Of midnight upon noon ! 20

And Law, an unloosed maniac, strong,
 Blood-drunken, through the blackness trod,
 Hoarse-shouting in the ear of God
 The blasphemy of wrong.

“ O Mother, from thy memories proud,
 Thy old renown, dear Commonwealth,
 Lend this dead air a breeze of health,
 And smite with stars this cloud.

“ Mother of Freedom, wise and brave,
 Rise awful in thy strength,” I said; 30
 Ah me ! I spake but to the dead ;
 I stood upon her grave !

6th mo., 1854.

ARISEN AT LAST

I said I stood upon thy grave,
 My Mother State, when last the moon
 Of blossoms clomb the skies of June.

And, scattering ashes on my head,
I wore, undreaming of relief,
The sackcloth of thy shame and grief.

Again that moon of blossoms shines
On leaf and flower and folded wing,
And thou hast risen with the spring !

Once more thy strong maternal arms 10
Are round about thy children flung,—
A lioness that guards her young !

No threat is on thy closèd lips,
But in thine eye a power to smite
The mad wolf backward from its light.

Southward the baffled robber's track
Henceforth runs only; hereaway,
The fell lycanthrope finds no prey.

Henceforth, within thy sacred gates,
His first low howl shall downward draw 20
The thunder of thy righteous law.

Not mindless of thy trade and gain,
But, acting on the wiser plan,
'Thou'rt grown conservative of man.

So shalt thou clothe with life the hope,
Dream-painted on the sightless eyes
Of him who sang of Paradise,—

The vision of a Christian man,
In virtue, as in stature great
Embodied in a Christian State. 30

And thou, amidst thy sisterhood
Forbearing long, yet standing fast,
Shalt win their grateful thanks at last ;

When North and South shall strive no more,
 And all their feuds and fears be lost
 In Freedom's holy Pentecost.

6th mo., 1855.

FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE

Inscribed to friends under arrest for treason against the slave
 power.

THE age is dull and mean. Men creep,
 Not walk; with blood too pale and tame
 To pay the debt they owe to shame;
 Buy cheap, sell dear; eat, drink, and sleep
 Down-pillowed, deaf to moaning want;
 Pay tithes for soul-insurance; keep
 Six days to Mammon, one to Cant.

In such a time, give thanks to God,
 That somewhat of the holy rage
 With which the prophets in their age 10
 On all its decent seemings trod,
 Has set your feet upon the lie,
 That man and ox and soul and clod
 Are market stock to sell and buy!

The hot words from your lips, my own,
 To caution trained, might not repeat;
 But if some tares among the wheat
 Of generous thought and deed were sown,
 No common wrong provoked your zeal;
 The silken gauntlet that is thrown 20
 In such a quarrel rings like steel.

The brave old strife the fathers saw
 For Freedom calls for men again
 Like those who battled not in vain
 For England's Charter, Alfred's law;
 And right of speech and trial just
 Wage in your name their ancient war
 With venal courts and perjured trust.

God's ways seem dark, but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day; 30
The evil cannot brook delay,
The good can well afford to wait.
Give ermined knaves their hour of crime;
Ye have the future grand and great,
The safe appeal of Truth to Time !

1855.

TO PENNSYLVANIA

O STATE prayer-founded ! never hung
Such choice upon a people's tongue,
Such power to bless or ban,
As that which makes thy whisper Fate,
For which on thee the centuries wait,
And destinies of man !

Across thy Alleghanian chain,
With groanings from a land in pain,
The west-wind finds its way :
Wild-wailing from Missouri's flood 10
The crying of thy children's blood
Is in thy ears to-day !

And unto thee in Freedom's hour
Of sorest need God gives the power
To ruin or to save;
To wound or heal, to blight or bless
With fertile field or wilderness,
A free home or a grave !

Then let thy virtue match the crime,
Rise to a level with the time; 20
And, if a son of thine
Betray or tempt thee, Brutus-like
For Fatherland and Freedom strike
As Justice gives the sign.

Wake, sleeper, from thy dream of ease,
 The great occasion's forelock seize;
 And let the north-wind strong,
 And golden leaves of autumn, be
 Thy coronal of Victory
 And thy triumphal song.

30

10th mo., 1856.

THE PASS OF THE SIERRA

ALL night above their rocky bed
 They saw the stars march slow;
 The wild Sierra overhead,
 The desert's death below.

The Indian from his lodge of bark,
 The grey bear from his den,
 Beyond their camp-fire's wall of dark,
 Glared on the mountain men.

Still upward turned, with anxious strain,
 Their leader's sleepless eye,
 Where splinters of the mountain chain
 Stood black against the sky.

10

The night waned slow: at last, a glow,
 A gleam of sudden fire,
 Shot up behind the walls of snow,
 And tipped each icy spire.

"Up, men!" he cried, "yon rocky cone,
 To-day, please God, we'll pass,
 And look from Winter's frozen throne
 On Summer's flowers and grass!"

20

They set their faces to the blast,
 They trod the eternal snow,
 And faint, worn, bleeding, hailed at last
 The promised land below.

Behind, they saw the snow-cloud tossed
By many an icy horn;
Before, warm valleys, wood-embossed,
And green with vines and corn.

They left the Winter at their backs
To flap his baffled wing, 30
And downward, with the cataracts,
Leaped to the lap of Spring.

Strong leader of that mountain band,
Another task remains,
To break from Slavery's desert land
A path to Freedom's plains.

The winds are wild, the way is drear,
Yet, flashing through the night,
Lo ! icy ridge and rocky spear
Blaze out in morning light ! 40

Rise up, Frémont ! and go before ;
The Hour must have its Man ;
Put on the hunting-shirt once more,
And lead in Freedom's van !

8th mo., 1856.

ON A PRAYER-BOOK,

WITH ITS FRONTISPIECE, ARY SCHEFFER'S "CHRIST'S
CONSOLATOR," AMERICANIZED BY THE OMISSION
OF THE BLACK MAN.

O ARY SCHEFFER ! when beneath thine eye,
Touched with the light that cometh from above,
Grew the sweet picture of the dear Lord's love,
No dream hadst thou that Christian hands would tear
Therefrom the token of His equal care,
And make thy symbol of His truth a lie !

The poor, dumb slave whose shackles fall away
 In His compassionate gaze, grubbed smoothly out,
 To mar no more the exercise devout
 Of sleek oppression kneeling down to pray 10
 Where the great oriel stains the Sabbath day !
 Let whoso can before such praying-books
 Kneel on his velvet cushion ; I, for one,
 Would sooner bow, a Parsee, to the sun,
 Or tend a prayer-wheel in Thibetan brooks,
 Or beat a drum on Yedo's temple-floor.
 No falsèr idol man has bowed before,
 In Indian groves or islands of the sea,
 Than that which through the quaint-carved Gothic
 door
 Looks forth,—a Church without humanity ! 20
 Patron of pride, and prejudice, and wrong,—
 The rich man's charm and fetish of the strong,
 The Eternal Fullness meted, clipped, and shorn,
 The seamless robe of equal mercy torn,
 The dear Christ hidden from His kindred flesh,
 And, in His poor ones, crucified afresh !
 Better the simple Lama scattering wide,
 Where sweeps the storm Alechan's steppes along,
 His paper horses for the lost to ride,
 And wearying Buddha with his prayers to make 30
 The figures living for the traveller's sake,
 Than he who hopes with cheap praise to beguile
 The ear of God, dishonouring man the while ;
 Who dreams the pearl gate's hinges, rusty grown,
 Are moved by flattery's oil of tongue alone ;
 That in the scale Eternal Justice bears
 The generous deed weighs less than selfish prayers,
 And words intoned with graceful unction move
 The Eternal Goodness more than lives of truth and love.
 Alas, the Church ! The reverend head of Jay, 40
 Enhaloed with its saintly silvered hair,
 Adorns no more the places of her prayer ;
 And brave young Tyng, too early called away,
 Troubles the Haman of her courts no more
 Like the just Hebrew at the Assyrian's door ;

And her sweet ritual, beautiful but dead
As the dry husk from which the grain is shed,
And holy hymns from which the life devout
Of saints and martyrs has wellnigh gone out,
Like candles dying in exhausted air, 50
For Sabbath use in measured grists are ground;
And, ever while the spiritual mill goes round,
Between the upper and the nether stones,
Unseen, unheard, the wretched bondman groans,
And urges his vain plea, prayer-smothered, anthem-
drowned !

O heart of mine, keep patience ! Looking forth,
As from the Mount of Vision, I behold,
Pure, just, and free, the Church of Christ on earth;
The martyr's dream, the golden age foretold !
And found, at last, the mystic Graal I see, 60
Brimmed with His blessing, pass from lip to lip
In sacred pledge of human fellowship;
And over all the songs of angels hear;
Songs of the love that casteth out all fear;
Songs of the Gospel of Humanity !
Lo ! in the midst, with the same look He wore,
Healing and blessing on Gennesaret's shore,
Folding together, with the all-tender might
Of His great love, the dark hands and the white,
Stands the Consoler, soothing every pain, 70
Making all burdens light, and breaking every chain.

1859.

THE SUMMONS

My ear is full of summer sounds,
Of summer sights my languid eye;
Beyond the dusty village bounds
I loiter in my daily rounds,
And in the noon-time shadows lie.

I hear the wild bee wind his horn,
 The bird swings on the ripened wheat,
 The long green lances of the corn
 Are tilting in the winds of morn,
 The locust shrills his song of heat. 10

Another sound my spirit hears,
 A deeper sound that drowns them all;
 A voice of pleading choked with tears,
 The call of human hopes and fears,
 The Macedonian cry to Paul!

The storm-bell rings, the trumpet blows;
 I know the word and countersign;
 Wherever Freedom's vanguard goes,
 Where stand or fall her friends or foes,
 I know the place that should be mine. 20

Shamed be the hands that idly fold,
 And lips that woo the reed's accord,
 When laggard Time the hour has tolled
 For true with false and new with old
 To fight the battles of the Lord!

O brothers! blest by partial Fate
 With power to match the will and deed,
 To him your summons comes too late
 Who sinks beneath his armour's weight,
 And has no answer but God-speed! 30

1860.

THY WILL BE DONE

WE see not, know not: all our way
 Is night, -- with Thee alone is day:
 From out the torrent's troubled drift,
 Above the storm our prayers we lift,
 Thy will be done!

The flesh may fail, the heart may faint,
But who are we to make complaint,
Or dare to plead, in times like these,
The weakness of our love of ease ?

Thy will be done !

10

We take with solemn thankfulness
Our burden up, nor ask it less,
And count it joy that even we
May suffer, serve, or wait for Thee,
Whose will be done !

Though dim as yet in tint and line,
We trace Thy picture's wise design,
And thank Thee that our age supplies
Its dark relief of sacrifice.

Thy will be done !

20

And if, in our unworthiness,
Thy sacrificial wine we press ;
If from Thy ordeal's heated bars
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,
Thy will be done !

If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath vicarious power,
And, blest by Thee, our present pain,
Be Liberty's eternal gain,

Thy will be done !

30

Strike, Thou the Master, we Thy keys,
The anthem of the destinies !
The minor of Thy loftier strain,
Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain,
Thy will be done !

SONG OF THE NEGRO BOATMEN

Oh, praise an' tanks ! De Lord He come
 To set de people free;
 An' massa tink it day ob doom,
 An' we ob jubilee.

De Lord dat heap de Red Sea waves
 He jus' as 'trong as den;

He say de word: we las' night slaves;
 To-day, de Lord's free men.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

We'll hab de rice an' corn;

Oh nebber you fear, if nebber you hear
 De driver blow his horn !

10

Ole massa on he trabbels gone;

He leaf de land behind :

De Lord's breff blow him funder on,

Like corn-shuck in de wind.

We own de hoe, we own de plough,

We own de hands dat hold;

We sell de pig, we sell de cow,

But nebber chile be sold.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

We'll hab de rice an' corn;

Oh nebber you fear, if nebber you hear

De driver blow his horn !

20

We pray de Lord: He gib us signs

Dat some day we be free;

De norf-wind tell it to de pines,

De wild-duck to de sea;

We tink it when de church-bell ring,

We dream it in de dream;

De rice-bird mean it when he sing,

De eagle when he scream.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

We'll hab de rice an' corn;

Oh nebber you fear, if nebber you hear

De driver blow his horn !

30

We know de promise nebber fail,
An' nebber lie de word;
So, like de 'postles in de jail,
We waited for de Lord: 40
An' now He open ebery door,
An' trow away de key;
He tink we lub Him so before,
We lub Him better free.
De yam will grow, de cotton blow,
He'll gib de rice an' corn;
Oh nebber you fear, if nebber you hear
De driver blow his horn!

1862.

THE BATTLE AUTUMN OF 1862

THE flags of war like storm-birds fly,
The charging trumpets blow;
Yet rolls no thunder in the sky,
No earthquake strives below.

And, calm and patient, Nature keeps
Her ancient promise well,
Though o'er her bloom and greenness sweeps
The battle's breath of hell.

And still she walks in golden hours
Through harvest-happy farms, 10
And still she wears her fruits and flowers
Like jewels on her arms.

What mean the gladness of the plain,
This joy of eve and morn,
The mirth that shakes the beard of grain
And yellow locks of corn?

Ah! eyes may well be full of tears,
And hearts with hate are hot;
But even-paced come round the years,
And Nature changes not. 20

She meets with smiles our bitter grief,
 With songs our groans of pain;
 She mocks with tint of flower and leaf
 The war-field's crimson stain.

Still, in the cannon's pause, we hear
 Her sweet thanksgiving-psalm;
 Too near to God for doubt or fear,
 She shares the eternal calm.

She knows the seed lies safe below
 The fires that blast and burn;
 For all the tears of blood we sow
 She waits the rich return.

30

She sees with clearer eye than ours
 The good of suffering born,—
 The hearts that blossom like her flowers,
 And ripen like her corn.

Oh, give to us, in times like these,
 The vision of her eyes;
 And make her fields and fruited trees
 Our golden prophecies !

40

Oh, give to us her finer ear !
 Above this stormy din,
 We too would hear the bells of cheer
 Ring peace and freedom in.

1862.

BARBARA FRIETCHIE

UP from the meadows rich with corn,
 Clear in the cool September morn,
 The clustered spires of Frederick stand
 Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.
 Round about them orchards sweep,
 Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall ;

Over the mountains winding down, 11
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten ;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down ;

In her attic window the staff she set, 12
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced ; the old flag met his sight.

“ Halt ! ” — the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
“ Fire ! ” — out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash ;
It rent the banner with seam and gash. 30

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

"Shoot, if you must, this old grey head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word;

40

"Who touches a hair of yon grey head
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

50

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honour to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

60

WHAT THE BIRDS SAID

THE birds against the April wind
 Flew northward, singing as they flew;
 They sang, "The land we leave behind
 Has swords for corn-blades, blood for dew."

"O wild-birds, flying from the South,
 What saw and heard ye, gazing down?"

"We saw the mortar's upturned mouth,
 The sickened camp, the blazing town!"

"Beneath the bivouac's starry lamps,
 We saw your march-worn children die; 10
 In shrouds of moss, in cypress swamps,
 We saw your dead uncoffined lie.

"We heard the starving prisoner's sighs,
 And saw, from line and trench, your sons
 Follow our flight with home-sick eyes
 Beyond the battery's smoking guns."

"And heard and saw ye only wrong
 And pain," I cried, "O wing-worn flocks?"

"We heard," they sang, "the freedman's song,
 The crash of Slavery's broken locks! 20

"We saw from new, uprising States
 The treason-nursing mischief spurned,
 As, crowding Freedom's ample gates,
 The long-estranged and lost returned.

"O'er dusky faces, seamed and old,
 And hands horn-hard with unpaid toil,
 With hope in every rustling fold,
 We saw your star-dropt flag uncoil.

"And struggling up through sounds accursed,
 A grateful murmur clomb the air; 30
 A whisper scarcely heard at first,
 It filled the listening heavens with prayer.

“ And sweet and far, as from a star,
 Replied a voice which shall not cease,
 Till, drowning all the noise of war,
 It sings the blessed song of peace !”

So to me, in a doubtful day
 Of chill and slowly greening spring,
 Low stooping from the cloudy grey,
 The wild-birds sang or seemed to sing. 40

They vanished in the misty air,
 The song went with them in their flight ;
 But lo ! they left the sunset fair,
 And in the evening there was light.

LAUS DEO !

On hearing the bells ring on the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. The resolution was adopted by Congress, January 31, 1865. The ratification by the requisite number of States was announced December 18, 1865.

It is done !
 Clang of bell and roar of gun
 Send the tidings up and down.
 How the belfries rock and reel !
 How the great guns, peal on peal,
 Fling the joy from town to town !

Ring, O bells !
 Every stroke exulting tells
 Of the burial hour of crime.
 Loud and long, that all may hear,
 Ring for every listening ear
 Of Eternity and Time ! 10

Let us kneel :
 God's own voice is in that peal,
 And this spot is holy ground.
 Lord, forgive us ! What are we,
 That our eyes this glory see,
 That our ears have heard the sound !

For the Lord
On the whirlwind is abroad; 20
In the earthquake He has spoken;
He has smitten with His thunder
The iron walls asunder,
And the gates of brass are broken !

Loud and long
Lift the old exulting song,
Sing with Miriam by the sea,
He has cast the mighty down;
Horse and rider sink and drown;
“ He hath triumphed gloriously !” 30

Did we dare,
In our agony of prayer,
Ask for more than He has done ?
When was ever His right hand
Over any time or land
Stretched as now beneath the sun ?

How they pale,
Ancient myth and song and tale,
In this wonder of our days,
When the cruel rod of war 40
Blossoms white with righteous law,
And the wrath of man is praise !

Blotted out !
All within and all about
Shall a fresher life begin ;
Freer breathe the universe
As it rolls its heavy curse
On the dead and buried sin !

It is done !
In the circuit of the sun 50
Shall the sound thereof go forth.
It shall bid the sad rejoice,
It shall give the dumb a voice,
It shall belt with joy the earth !

Ring and swing,
 Bells of joy ! On morning's wing
 Send the song of praise abroad !
 With a sound of broken chains
 Tell the nations that He reigns,
 Who alone is Lord and God !

60

1865.

HYMN

FOR THE CELEBRATION OF EMANCIPATION AT
 NEWBURYPORT.

NOT unto us who did but seek
 The word that burned within to speak,
 Not unto us this day belong
 The triumph and exultant song.

Upon us fell in early youth
 The burden of unwelcome truth,
 And left us, weak and frail and few,
 The censor's painful work to do.

Thenceforth our life a fight became,
 The air we breathed was hot with blame ;
 For not with gauged and softened tone
 We made the bondman's cause our own.

10

We bore, as Freedom's hope forlorn,
 The private hate, the public scorn ;
 Yet held through all the paths we trod
 Our faith in man and trust in God.

We prayed and hoped ; but still, with awe,
 The coming of the sword we saw ;
 We heard the nearing steps of doom,
 We saw the shade of things to come.

20

In grief which they alone can feel
 Who from a mother's wrong appeal,
 With blended lines of fear and hope
 We cast our country's horoscope.

For still within her house of life
 We marked the lurid sign of strife,
 And, poisoning and embittering all,
 We saw the star of Wormwood fall.

Deep as our love for her became
 Our hate of all that wrought her shame, 30
 And if, thereby, with tongue and pen
 We erred,—we were but mortal men.

We hoped for peace; our eyes survey
 The blood-red dawn of Freedom's day;
 We prayed for love to loose the chain;
 'Tis shorn by battle's axe in twain!

Nor skill nor strength nor zeal of ours
 Has mined and heaved the hostile towers;
 Not by our hands is turned the key
 That sets the sighing captives free. 40

A redder sea than Egypt's wave
 Is piled and parted for the slave;
 A darker cloud moves on in light;
 A fiercer fire is guide by night!

The praise, O Lord! is Thine alone,
 In Thy own way Thy work is done!
 Our poor gifts at Thy feet we cast,
 To whom be glory, first and last!

1865.

AFTER THE WAR

THE PEACE AUTUMN

Written for the Essex County Agricultural Festival, 1865.

THANK God for rest, where none molest,
 And none can make afraid;
 For Peace that sits as Plenty's guest
 Beneath the homestead shade!

Bring pike and gun, the sword's red scourge,
The negro's broken chains,
And beat them at the blacksmith's forge
To ploughshares for our plains.

Alike henceforth our hills of snow,
And vales where cotton flowers;
All streams that flow, all winds that blow,
Are Freedom's motive-powers. 10

Henceforth to Labour's chivalry
Be knightly honours paid;
For nobler than the sword's shall be
The sickle's accolade.

Build up an altar to the Lord,
O grateful hearts of ours !
And shape it of the greenest sward
That ever drank the showers. 20

Lay all the bloom of gardens there,
And there the orchard fruits;
Bring golden grain from sun and air,
From earth her goodly roots.

There let our banners droop and flow,
The stars uprise and fall;
Our roll of martyrs, sad and slow,
Let sighing breezes call.

Their names let hands of horn and tan
And rough-shod feet applaud,
Who died to make the slave a man,
And link with toil reward. 30

There let the common heart keep time
To such an anthem sung
As never swelled on poet's rhyme,
Or thrilled on singer's tongue.

Song of our burden and relief,
Of peace and long annoy;
The passion of our mighty grief
And our exceeding joy !

40

- A song of praise to Him who filled
The harvests sown in tears,
And gave each field a double yield
To feed our battle-years !

A song of faith that trusts the end
To match the good begun,
Nor doubts the power of Love to blend
The hearts of men as one !

TO THE THIRTY-NINTH CONGRESS

The thirty-ninth congress was that which met in 1865, after the close of the war, when it was charged with the great question of reconstruction; the uppermost subject in men's minds was the standing of those who had recently been in arms against the Union and their relations to the freedmen.

O PEOPLE-CHOSEN ! are ye not
Likewise the chosen of the Lord,
To do His will and speak His word ?

From the loud thunder-storm of war
Not man alone hath called ye forth,
But He, the God of all the earth !

The torch of vengeance in your hands
He quenches; unto Him belongs
The solemn recompense of wrongs.

Enough of blood the land has seen,
And not by cell or gallows-stair
Shall ye the way of God prepare.

10

Say to the pardon-seekers: Keep
Your manhood, bend no suppliant knees,
Nor palter with unworthy pleas.

Above your voices sounds the wail
Of starving men; we shut in vain
Our eyes to Pillow's ghastly stain.

What words can drown that bitter cry?
What tears wash out the stain of death? 20
What oaths confirm your broken faith?

From you alone the guaranty
Of union, freedom, peace, we claim;
We urge no conqueror's terms of shame.

Alas! no victor's pride is ours;
We bend above our triumphs won
Like David o'er his rebel son.

Be men, not beggars. Cancel all
By one brave, generous action; trust
Your better instincts, and be just! 30

Make all men peers before the law,
Take hands from off the negro's throat,
Give black and white an equal vote.

Keep all your forfeit lives and lands,
But give the common law's redress
To labour's utter nakedness.

Revive the old heroic will;
Be in the right as brave and strong
As ye have proved yourselves in wrong.

Defeat shall then be victory, 40
Your loss the wealth of full amends,
And hate be love, and foes be friends.

Then buried be the dreadful past,
Its common slain be mourned, and let
All memories soften to regret.

Then shall the Union's mother-heart
Her lost and wandering ones recall,
Forgiving and restoring all,—

And Freedom break her marble trance
 Above the Capitolian dome, 50
 Stretch hands, and bid ye welcome home !

November, 1865.

HOWARD AT ATLANTA

RIGHT in the track where Sherman
 Ploughed his red furrow,
 Out of the narrow cabin,
 Up from the cellar's burrow,
 Gathered the little black people,
 With freedom newly dowered,
 Where, beside their Northern teacher,
 Stood the soldier, Howard.

He listened and heard the children
 Of the poor and long enslaved 10
 Reading the words of Jesus,
 Singing the songs of David.
 Behold !—the dumb lips speaking,
 The blind eyes seeing !
 Bones of the Prophet's vision
 Warmed into being !

Transformed he saw them passing
 Their new life's portal !
 Almost it seemed the mortal
 Put on the immortal. 20
 No more with the beasts of burden,
 No more with stone and clod,
 But crowned with glory and honour
 In the image of God !

There was the human chattel
 Its manhood taking;
 There, in each dark, bronze statue,
 A soul was waking !
 The man of many battles,
 With tears his eyelids pressing, 30
 Stretched over those dusky foreheads
 His one-armed blessing.

And he said: "Who hears can never
 Fear for or doubt you;
 What shall I tell the children
 Up North about you?"
 Then ran round a whisper, a murmur,
 Some answer devising;
 And a little boy stood up: "General,
 Tell 'em we're rising!"

40

O black boy of Atlanta!
 But half was spoken:
 The slave's chain and the master's
 Alike are broken.
 The one curse of the races
 Held both in tether:
 They are rising,—all are rising,
 The black and white together!

O brave men and fair women!
 Ill comes of hate and scorning:
 Shall the dark faces only
 Be turned to morning?—
 Make Time your sole avenger,
 All-healing, all-redressing;
 Meet Fate half-way, and make it
 A joy and blessing!

50

1869.

THE EMANCIPATION GROUP

Moses Kimball, a citizen of Boston, presented to the city a duplicate of the Freedman's Memorial statue erected in Lincoln Square, Washington. The group, which stands in Park Square, represents the figure of a slave, from whose limbs the broken fetters have fallen, kneeling in gratitude at the feet of Lincoln. The group was designed by Thomas Ball, and was unveiled December 9, 1879. These verses were written for the occasion.

AMIDST thy sacred effigies
 Of old renown give place,
 O city, Freedom-loved! to his
 Whose hand unchained a race.

Take the worn frame, that rested not
Save in a martyr's grave;
The care-lined face, that none forgot,
Bent to the kneeling slave.

Let man be free ! The mighty word
He spake was not his own; 10
An impulse from the Highest stirred
These chiselled lips alone.

The cloudy sign, the fiery guide,
Along his pathway ran,
And Nature, through his voice, denied
The ownership of man.

We rest in peace where these sad eyes
Saw peril, strife, and pain;
His was the nation's sacrifice,
And ours the priceless gain. 20

O symbol of God's will on earth
As it is done above !
Bear witness to the cost and worth
Of justice and of love.

Stand in thy place and testify
To coming ages long,
That truth is stronger than a lie,
And righteousness than wrong.

GARRISON

THE storm and peril overpast,
The hounding hatred shamed and still,
Go, soul of freedom ! take at last
The place which thou alone canst fill.

Confirm the lesson taught of old—
Life saved for self is lost, while they
Who lose it in His service hold
The lease of God's eternal day.

Not for thyself, but for the slave
Thy words of thunder shook the world; 10
No selfish griefs or hatred gave
The strength wherewith thy bolts were hurled.

From lips that Sinai's trumpet blew
We heard a tender under-song;
Thy very wrath from pity grew,
From love of man thy hate of wrong.

Now past and present are as one;
The life below is life above;
Thy mortal years have but begun
Thy immortality of love. 20

With somewhat of thy lofty faith
We lay thy outworn garment by,
Give death but what belongs to death,
And life the life that cannot die !

Not for a soul like thine the calm
Of selfish ease and joys of sense;
But duty, more than crown or palm,
Its own exceeding recompense.

Go up and on ! thy day well done,
Its morning promise well fulfilled, 30
Arise to triumphs yet unwon,
To holier tasks that God has willed.

Go, leave behind thee all that mars
The work below of man for man;
With the white legions of the stars
Do service such as angels can.

Wherever wrong shall right deny
Or suffering spirits urge their plea,
Be thine a voice to smite the lie,
A hand to set the captive free ! 40

SONGS OF LABOUR AND REFORM

THE QUAKER OF THE OLDEN TIME

THE Quaker of the olden time !
How calm and firm and true,
Unspotted by its wrong and crime,
He walked the dark earth through.
The lust of power, the love of gain,
The thousand lures of sin
Around him, had no power to stain
The purity within.

With that deep insight which detects
All great things in the small, 10
And knows how each man's life affects
The spiritual life of all,
He walked by faith and not by sight,
By love and not by law;
The presence of the wrong or right
He rather felt than saw.

He felt that wrong with wrong partakes,
That nothing stands alone,
That whoso gives the motive, makes
His brother's sin his own. 20
And, pausing not for doubtful choice
Of evils great or small,
He listened to that inward voice
Which called away from all.

300 SONGS OF LABOUR AND REFORM

O Spirit of that early day,
So pure and strong and true,
Be with us in the narrow way
Our faithful fathers knew.
Give strength the evil to forsake,
The cross of Truth to bear,
And love and reverent fear to make
Our daily lives a prayer !

30

1838.

DEMOCRACY

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.—*Matthew* vii. 12.

BEARER of Freedom's holy light,
Breaker of Slavery's chain and rod,
The foe of all which pains the sight,
Or wounds the generous ear of God !

Beautiful yet thy temples rise,
Though there profaning gifts are thrown ;
And fires unkindled of the skies
Are glaring round thy altar-stone.

Still sacred, though thy name be breathed
By those whose hearts thy truth deride ;
And garlands, plucked from thee, are wreathed
Around the haughty brows of Pride.

10

Oh, ideal of my boyhood's time !
The faith in which my father stood.
Even when the sons of Lust and Crime
Had stained thy peaceful courts with blood !

Still to those courts my footsteps turn,
For though the mists which darken there,
I see the flame of Freedom burn, —
The Kebla of the patriot's prayer !

20

The generous feeling, pure and warm,
Which owns the right of all divine;
The pitying heart, the helping arm,
The prompt self-sacrifice, are thine.

Beneath thy broad, impartial eye,
How fade the lines of caste and birth !
How equal in their suffering lie
The groaning multitudes of earth !

Still to a stricken brother true,
Whatever clime hath nurtured him; 30
As stooped to heal the wounded Jew
The worshipper of Gerizim.

By misery unrepelled, unawed
By pomp or power, thou seest a Man
In prince or peasant, slave or lord,
Pale priest, or swarthy artisan.

Through all disguise, form, place, or name,
Beneath the flaunting robes of sin,
Through poverty and squalid shame,
Thou lookest on the man within. 40

On man, as man, retaining yet,
Howe'er debased, and soiled, and dim,
The crown upon his forehead set,
The immortal gift of God to him.

And there is reverence in thy look;
For that frail form which mortals wear
The Spirit of the Holiest took,
And veiled His perfect brightness there.

Not from the shallow babbling fount
Of vain philosophy thou art; 50
He who of old on Syria's Mount
Thrilled, warmed, by turns, the listener's heart,

302 SONGS OF LABOUR AND REFORM

In holy words which cannot die,
 In thoughts which angels leaned to know,
 Proclaimed thy message from on high,
 Thy mission to a world of woe.

That voice's echo hath not died !
 From the blue lake of Galilee,
 And Tabor's lonely mountain-side,
 It calls a struggling world to thee. 60

Thy name and watchword o'er this land
 I hear in every breeze that stirs,
 And round a thousand altars stand
 Thy banded party worshippers.

Not to these altars of a day,
 At party's call, my gift I bring;
 But on thy olden shrine I lay
 A freeman's dearest offering:

The voiceless utterance of his will,—
 His pledge to Freedom and to Truth, 70
 That manhood's heart remembers still
 The homage of his generous youth.

Election Day, 1841.

TO THE REFORMERS OF ENGLAND

This poem was addressed to those who like Richard Cobden and John Bright were seeking the reform of political evils in Great Britain by peaceful and Christian means. It will be remembered that the Anti-Corn-Law League was in the midst of its labours at this time.

God bless ye, brothers ! in the fight
 Ye're waging now, ye cannot fail,
 For better is your sense of right
 Than king-craft's triple mail.

Than tyrant's law, or bigot's ban,
 More mighty is your simplest word;
 The free heart of an honest man
 Than crosier or the sword.

Go, let your blinded Church rehearse
 The lesson it has learned so well; 10
 It moves not with its prayer or curse
 The gates of heaven or hell.

Let the State scaffold rise again;
 Did Freedom die when Russell died?
 Forget ye how the blood of Vane
 From earth's green bosom cried?

The great hearts of your olden time
 Are beating with you, full and strong;
 All holy memories and sublime
 And glorious round ye throng. 20

The bluff, bold men of Runnymede
 Are with ye still in times like these;
 The shades of England's mighty dead,
 Your cloud of witnesses!

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
 By every wind and every tide;
 The voice of Nature and of God
 Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
 Are those which Heaven itself has wrought.
 Light, Truth, and Love; your battle-ground
 The free, broad field of Thought. 32

No partial, selfish purpose breaks
 The simple beauty of your plan,
 Nor lie from throne or altar shakes
 Your steady faith in man.

Few leaves of Fancy's spring remain:

But what I have I give to thee,
The o'er-sunned bloom of summer's plain,
And paler flowers, the latter rain
Calls from the westering slope of life's autumnal lea.

Above the fallen groves of green, 11

Where youth's enchanted forest stood,
Dry root and moss'd trunk between,
A sober after-growth is seen,
As springs the pine where falls the gay-leafed maple
wood!

Yet birds will sing, and breezes play

Their leaf-harps in the sombre tree;
And through the bleak and wintry day
It keeps its steady green away,—
So, even my after-thoughts may have a charm for thee.

Art's perfect forms no moral need, 21

And beauty is its own excuse;
But for the dull and flowerless weed
Some healing virtue still must plead,
And the rough ore must find its honours in its use

So haply these, my simple lays

Of homely toil, may serve to show
The orchard bloom and tasselled maize
That skirt and gladden duty's ways,
The unsung beauty hid life's common things below.

Haply from them the toiler, bent 31

Above his forge or plough, may gain
A manlier spirit of content,
And feel that life is wisest spent
Where the strong working hand makes strong the
working brain.

The doom which to the guilty pair

Without the walls of Eden came,
Transforming sinless ease to care
And rugged toil, no more shall bear
The burden of old crime, or mark of primal shame.

A blessing now, a curse no more; - 41

Since He, whose name we breathe with awe,
The coarse mechanic vesture wore,
A poor man toiling with the poor.
In labour, as in prayer, fulfilling the same law.

1850.

THE LUMBERMEN

WILDLY round our woodland quarters
Sad-voiced Autumn grieves;
Thickly down these swelling waters
Float his fallen leaves.
Through the tall and naked timber,
Column-like and old,
Gleam the sunsets of November,
From their skies of gold.

O'er us, to the southland heading,
Screams the grey wild-goose; 10
On the night-frost sounds the treading
Of the brindled moose.
Noiseless creeping, while we're sleeping,
Frost his task-work plies;
Soon, his icy bridges heaping,
Shall our log-piles rise.

When, with sounds of smothered thunder,
On some night of rain,
Lake and river break asunder
Winter's weakened chain, 20
Down the wild March flood shall bear them
To the saw-mill's wheel,
Or where Steam, the slave, shall tear them
With his teeth of steel.

Be it starlight, be it moonlight,
In these vales below,
When the earliest beams of sunlight
Streak the mountain's snow,

THE LUMBERMEN

307

Crisps the hoar-frost, keen and early,
 To our hurrying feet, 30
 And the forest echoes clearly
 All our blows repeat.

Where the crystal Ambijejis
 Stretches broad and clear,
 And Millnocket's pine-black ridges
 Hide the browsing deer:
 Where, through lakes and wide morasses,
 Or through rocky walls,
 Swift and strong, Penobscot passes
 White with foamy falls; 40

Where, through clouds, are glimpses given
 Of Katahdin's sides,—
 Rock and forest piled to heaven,
 Torn and ploughed by slides !
 Far below, the Indian trapping,
 In the sunshine warm;
 Far above, the snow-cloud wrapping
 Half the peak in storm !

Where are mossy carpets better
 Than the Persian weaves, 50
 And than Eastern perfumes sweeter
 Seem the fading leaves;
 And a music wild and solemn,
 From the pine-tree's height,
 Rolls its vast and sea-like volume
 On the wind of night;

Make we here our camp of winter;
 And, through sleet and snow.
 Pitchy knot and beechen splinter
 On our hearth shall glow. 60
 Here, with mirth to lighten duty,
 We shall lack alone
 Woman's smile and girlhood's beauty,
 Childhood's lisping tone.

But their hearth is brighter burning
 For our toil to-day;
 And the welcome of returning
 Shall our loss repay,
 When, like seamen from the waters,
 From the woods we come,
 Greeting sisters, wives, and daughters,
 Angels of our home !

70

Not for us the measured ringing
 From the village spire,
 Not for us the Sabbath singing
 Of the sweet-voiced choir:
 Ours the old, majestic temple,
 Where God's brightness shines
 Down the dome so grand and ample,
 Propped by lofty pines !

80

Through each branch-enwoven skylight,
 Speaks He in the breeze,
 As of old beneath the twilight
 Of lost Eden's trees !
 For His ear, the inward feeling
 Needs no outward tongue;
 He can see the spirit kneeling
 While the axe is swung.

Heeding truth alone, and turning
 From the false and dim,
 Lamp of toil or altar burning
 Are alike to Him.
 Strike then, comrades ! Trade is waiting
 On our rugged toil;
 Far ships waiting for the freighting
 Of our woodland spoil !

90

Ships whose traffic links these highlands,
 Bleak and cold, of ours,
 With the citron-planted islands
 Of a clime of flowers ;

100

To our frosts the tribute bringing
Of eternal heats;
In our lap of winter flinging
Tropic fruits and sweets.

Cheerly, on the axe of labour,
Let the sunbeams dance,
Better than the flash of sabre
Or the gleam of lance !
Strike ! With every blow is given
Freer sun and sky,
And the long-hid earth to heaven
Looks, with wondering eye !

110

Loud behind us grow the murmurs
Of the age to come ;
Clang of smiths, and tread of farmers,
Bearing harvest home !
Here her virgin lap with treasures
Shall the green earth fill ;
Waving wheat and golden maize-ears
Crown each beechen hill.

120

Keep who will the city's alleys,
Take the smooth-shorn plain ;
Give to us the cedarn valleys,
Rocks and hills of Maine !
In our North-land, wild and woody,
Let us still have part :
Rugged nurse and mother sturdy,
Hold us to thy heart !

Oh, our free hearts beat the warmer
For thy breath of snow ;
And our tread is all the firmer
For thy rocks below.
Freedom, hand in hand with labour,
Walketh strong and brave ;
On the forehead of his neighbour
No man writeth Slave ! .

130

310 SONGS OF LABOUR AND REFORM

Lo, the day breaks ! old Katahdin's
 Pine-trees show its fires,
 While from these dim forest gardens
 Rise their blackened spires.
 Up, my comrades ! up and doing !
 Manhood's rugged play
 Still renewing, bravely hewing
 Through the world our way !

140

1845.

THE SHIP-BUILDERS

THE sky is ruddy in the east,
 The earth is grey below,
 And, spectral in the river-mist,
 The ship's white timbers show.
 Then let the sounds of measured stroke
 And grating saw begin ;
 The broad-axe to the gnarl'd oak,
 The mallet to the pin !

Hark ! roars the bellows, blast on blast,
 The sooty smithy jars,
 And fire-sparks, rising far and fast,
 Are fading with the stars.
 All day for us the smith shall stand
 Beside that flashing forge ;
 All day for us his heavy hand
 The groaning anvil scourge.

10

From far-off hills, the panting team
 For us is toiling near ;
 For us the raftsmen down the stream
 Their island barges steer.
 Rings out for us the axe-man's stroke
 In forests old and still ;
 For us the century-circled oak
 Falls crashing down his hill.

20

Up ! up ! in nobler toil than ours
No craftsmen bear a part :
We make of Nature's giant powers
The slaves of human Art.
Lay rib to rib and beam to beam,
And drive the treenails free ;
Nor faithless joint nor yawning seam
Shall tempt the searching sea !

30

Where'er the keel of our good ship
The sea's rough field shall plough ;
Where'er her tossing spars shall drip
With salt-spray caught below ;
That ship must heed her master's beck,
Her helm obey his hand,
And seamen tread her reeling deck
As if they trod the land.

40

Her oaken ribs the vulture-beak
Of Northern ice may peel ;
The sunken rock and coral peak
May grate along her keel ;
And know we well the painted shell
We give to wind and wave,
Must float, the sailor's citadel,
Or sink, the sailor's grave !

Ho ! strike away the bars and blocks,
And set the good ship free !
Why lingers on these dusty rocks
The young bride of the sea ?
Look ! how she moves adown the grooves,
In graceful beauty now !
How lowly on the breast she loves
Sinks down her virgin prow !

50

God bless her ! wheresoe'er the breeze
Her snowy wing shall fan,
Aside the frozen Hebrides,
Or sultry Hindostan !

60

312 SONGS OF LABOUR AND REFORM

Where'er, in mart or on the main,
 With peaceful flag unfurled,
 She helps to wind the silken chain
 Of commerce round the world !

Speed on the ship ! But let her bear
 No merchandise of sin,
 No groaning cargo of despair
 Her roomy hold within ;
 No Lethean drug for Eastern lands,
 Nor poison-draught for ours ;
 But honest fruits of toiling hands
 And Nature's sun and showers.

70

Be hers the Prairie's golden grain,
 The Desert's golden sand,
 The clustered fruits of sunny Spain,
 The spice of Morning-land !
 Her pathway on the open main
 May blessings follow free,
 And glad hearts welcome back again
 Her white sails from the sea !

80

1846.

THE DROVERS

THROUGH heat and cold, and shower and sun,
 Still onward cheerly driving !
 There's life alone in duty done,
 And rest alone in striving.
 But see ! the day is closing cool,
 The woods are dim before us ;
 The white fog of the wayside pool
 Is creeping slowly o'er us.

The night is falling, comrades mine,
 Our footsore beasts are weary,
 And through yon elms the tavern sign
 Looks out upon us cheery.

10

The landlord beckons from his door,
His beechen fire is glowing;
These ample barns, with feed in store,
Are filled to overflowing.

From many a valley frowned across
By brows of rugged mountains;
From hillsides where, through spongy moss.
Gush out the river fountains; 20
From quiet farm-fields, green and low,
And bright with blooming clover;
From vales of corn the wandering crow
No richer hovers over,—

Day after day our way has been
O'er many a hill and hollow;
By lake and stream, by wood and glen,
Our stately drove we follow.
Through dust-clouds rising thick and dun,
As smoke of battle o'er us, 30
Their white horns glisten in the sun,
Like plumes and crests before us.

We see them slowly climb the hill,
As slow behind it sinking;
Or, thronging close, from roadside rill,
Or sunny lakelet, drinking.
Now crowding in the narrow road,
In thick and struggling masses,
They glare upon the teamster's load,
Or rattling coach that passes. 40

Anon, with toss of horn and tail,
And paw of hoof, and bellow,
They leap some farmer's broken pale,
O'er meadow-close or fallow.
Forth comes the startled goodman; forth
Wife, children, house-dog, sally,
Till once more on their dusty path
The baffled truants rally.

We drive no starvelings, seraggy grown,
 Loose-legged, and ribbed and bony, 50
 Like those who grind their noses down
 On pastures bare and stony,—
 Lank oxen, rough as Indian dogs,
 And cows too lean for shadows,
 Disputing feebly with the frogs
 The crop of saw-grass meadows !

In our good drove, so sleek and fair,
 No bones of leanness rattle;
 No tottering hide-bound ghosts are there,
 Or Pharaoh's evil cattle. 60
 Each stately beeve bespeaks the hand
 That fed him unrepining;
 The fatness of a goodly land
 In each dun hide is shining.

We've sought them where, in warmest nooks,
 The freshest feed is growing,
 By sweetest springs and clearest brooks
 Through honeysuckle flowing;
 Wherever hillsides, sloping south,
 Are bright with early grasses, 70
 Or, tracking green the lowland's drouth,
 The mountain streamlet passes.

But now the day is closing cool,
 The woods are dim before us,
 The white fog of the wayside pool
 Is creeping slowly o'er us.
 The cricket to the frog's bassoon
 His shrillest time is keeping;
 The sickle of yon setting moon
 The meadow-mist is reaping. 80

The night is falling, comrades mine,
 Our footsore beasts are weary,
 And through yon elms the tavern sign
 Looks out upon us cheery.

To-morrow, eastward with our charge
We'll go to meet the dawning.
Ere yet the pines of Kearsarge
Have seen the sun of morning.

When snow-flakes o'er the frozen earth,
Instead of birds, are flitting; 90
When children throng the glowing hearth,
And quiet wives are knitting;
While in the fire light strong and clear
Young eyes of pleasure glisten,
To tales of all we see and hear
The ears of home shall listen.

By many a Northern lake and hill,
From many a mountain pasture,
Shall Fancy play the Drover still.
And speed the long night faster. 100
Then let us on, through shower and sun,
And heat and cold, be driving;
There's life alone in duty done,
And rest alone in striving.

1847.

THE HUSKERS

It was late in mild October, and the long autumnal
rain
Had left the summer harvest-fields all green with grass
again;
The first sharp frosts had fallen, leaving all the wood-
lands gay
With the hues of summer's rainbow, or the meadow-
flowers of May.

Through a thin, dry mist, that morning, the sun rose
broad and red,
At first a rayless disk of fire, he brightened as he
sped;

Yet even his noontide glory fell chastened and subdued,
 On the cornfields and the orchards and softly pictured
 wood.

And all that quiet afternoon, slow sloping to the night,
 He wove with golden shuttle the haze with yellow
 light; 10
 Slanting through the painted beeches, he glorified the
 hill;
 And, beneath it, pond and meadow lay brighter,
 greener still.

And shouting boys in woodland haunts caught glimpses
 of that sky,
 Flecked by the many-tinted leaves, and laughed, they
 knew not why;
 And school-girls, gay with aster-flowers, beside the
 meadow brooks,
 Mingled the glow of autumn with the sunshine of sweet
 looks.

From spire and barn looked westerly the patient
 weathercocks;
 But even the birches on the hill stood motionless as
 rocks.
 No sound was in the woodlands, save the squirrel's
 dropping shell,
 And the yellow leaves among the boughs, low rustling
 as they fell. 20

The summer grains were harvested; the stubble-fields
 lay dry,
 Where June winds rolled, in light and shade, the pale
 green waves of rye;
 But still, on gentle hill-slopes, in valleys fringed with
 wood,
 Ungathered, bleaching in the sun, the heavy corn crop
 stood.

Bent low, by autumn's wind and rain, through husks
that, dry and sere,
Unfolded from their ripened charge, shone out the
yellow ear;
Beneath, the turnip lay concealed, in many a verdant
fold,
And glistened in the slanting light the pumpkin's sphere
of gold.

There wrought the busy harvesters; and many a
creaking wain
Bore slowly to the long barn-floor its load of husk and
grain; 30
Till broad and red, as when he rose, the sun sank down,
at last,
And like a merry guest's farewell, the day in brightness
passed.

And lo! as through the western pines, on meadow,
stream, and pond,
Flamed the red radiance of a sky, set all afire beyond,
Slowly o'er the eastern sea-bluffs a milder glory shone,
And the sunset and the moonrise were mingled into
one!

As thus into the quiet night the twilight lapsed away,
And deeper in the brightening moon the tranquil
shadows lay;
From many a brown old farm-house, and hamlet with-
out name,
Their milking and their home-tasks done, the merry
huskers came. 40

Swung o'er the heaped-up harvest, from pitchforks in
the mow,
Shone dimly down the lanterns on the pleasant scene
below;
The growing pile of husks behind, the golden ears
before,
And laughing eyes and busy hands and brown cheeks
glimmering o'er.

Half hidden, in a quiet nook, serene of look and heart,
 Talking their old times over, the old men sat apart;
 While up and down the unhusked pile, or nestling in
 its shade,
 At hide-and-seek, with laugh and shout, the happy
 children played.

Urged by the good host's daughter, a maiden young
 and fair,
 Lifting to light her sweet blue eyes and pride of soft
 brown hair, 50
 The master of the village school, sleek of hair and
 smooth of tongue,
 To the quaint tune of some old psalm, a husking-ballad
 sung.

THE CORN-SONG.

Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard !
 Heap high the golden corn !
 No richer gift has Autumn poured
 From out her lavish horn !

Let other lands, exulting, glean
 The apple from the pine,
 The orange from its glossy green,
 The cluster from the vine; 60

We better love the hardy gift
 Our rugged vales bestow,
 To cheer us when the storm shall drift
 Our harvest-fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and meads of flowers
 Our ploughs their furrows made,
 While on the hills the sun and showers
 Of changeful April played.

We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain
 Beneath the sun of May, 70
 And frightened from our sprouting grain
 The robber crows away.

All through the long, bright days of June
Its leaves grew green and fair,
And waved in hot midsummer's noon
Its soft and yellow hair.

And now, with autumn's moonlit eves,
Its harvest-time has come,
We pluck away the frosted leaves,
And bear the treasure home.

80

There, when the snows about us drift,
And winter winds are cold,
Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,
And knead its meal of gold.

Let vapid idlers loll in silk
Around their costly board;
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,
By homespun beauty poured !

Where'er the wide old kitchen hearth
Sends up its smoky curls,
Who will not thank the kindly earth,
And bless our farmer girls !

90

Then shame on all the proud and vain,
Whose folly laughs to scorn
The blessing of our hardy grain,
Our wealth of golden corn !

Let earth withhold her goodly root,
Let mildew blight the rye,
Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,
The wheat-field to the fly :

100

But let the good old crop adorn
The hills our fathers trod ;
Still let us, for His golden corn,
Send up our thanks to God !

THE REFORMER

ALL grim and soiled and brown with tan,
 I saw a Strong One, in his wrath,
 Smiting the godless shrines of man
 Along his path.

The Church, beneath her trembling dome,
 Essayed in vain her ghostly charm:
 Wealth shook within his gilded home
 With strange alarm.

Fraud from his secret chambers fled
 Before the sunlight bursting in: 10
 Sloth drew her pillow o'er her head
 To drown the din.

"Spare," Art implored, "yon holy pile;
 That grand, old, time-worn turret spare;"
 Meek Reverence, kneeling in the aisle,
 Cried out, "Forbear!"

Grey-bearded Use, who, deaf and blind,
 Groped for his old accustomed stone,
 Leaned on his staff, and wept to find
 His seat o'erthrown. 20

Young Romance raised his dreamy eyes,
 O'erhung with paly locks of gold,—
 "Why smite," he asked in sad surprise,
 "The fair, the old?"

Yet louder rang the Strong One's stroke,
 Yet nearer flashed his axe's gleam;
 Shuddering and sick of heart I woke,
 As from a dream.

I looked: aside the dust-cloud rolled,
 The Waster seemed the Builder too; 30
 Upspringing from the ruined Old
 I saw the New.

'Twas but the ruin of the bad,—
The wasting of the wrong and ill;
Whate'er of good the old time had
Was living still.

Calm grew the brows of him I feared;
The frown which awed me passed away,
And left behind a smile which cheered
Like breaking day.

40

The grain grew green on battle-plains,
O'er swarded war-mounds grazed the cow;
The slave stood forging from his chains
The spade and plough.

Where frowned the fort, pavilions gay
And cottage windows, flower-entwined,
Looked out upon the peaceful bay
And hills behind.

Through vine-wreathed cups with wine once red,
The lights on brimming crystal fell,
Drawn, sparkling, from the rivulet head
And mossy well.

50

Through prison walls, like Heaven-sent hope,
Fresh breezes blew, and sunbeams strayed,
And with the idle gallows-rope
The young child played.

Where the doomed victim in his cell
Had counted o'er the weary hours,
Glad school-girls, answering to the bell,
Came crowned with flowers.

60

Grown wiser for the lesson given, .
I fear no longer, for I know
That, where the share is deepest driven.
The best fruits grow.

The outworn rite, the old abuse,
 The pious fraud transparent grown,
 The good held captive in the use
 Of wrong alone,—

These wait their doom, from that great law
 Which makes the past time serve to-day:
 And fresher life the world shall draw
 From their decay. 71

Oh, backward-looking son of time!
 The new is old, the old is new,
 The cycle of a change sublime
 Still sweeping through.

So wisely taught the Indian seer;
 Destroying Seva, forming Brahm,
 Who wake by turns Earth's love and fear,
 Are one, the same. 80

Idly as thou, in that old day
 Thou mournest, did thy sire repine;
 So, in his time, thy child grown grey
 Shall sigh for thine.

But life shall on and upward go;
 Th' eternal step of Progress beats
 To that great anthem, calm and slow,
 Which God repeats.

Take heart! the Waster builds again,—
 A charmed life old Goodness hath;
 The tares may perish, but the grain
 Is not for death. 90

God works in all things; all obey
 His first propulsion from the night:
 Wake thou and watch! the world is grey
 With morning light!

ASTRÆA

" Jove means to settle
Astræa in her seat again,
And let down from his golden chain
An age of better metal."

BEN JONSON, 1615.

O POET rare and old !
Thy words are prophecies ;
Forward the age of gold,
The new Saturnian lies.

The universal prayer
And hope are not in vain ;
Rise, brothers ! and prepare
The way for Saturn's reign.

Perish shall all which takes
From labour's board and can ; 10
Perish shall all which makes
A spaniel of the man !

Free from its bonds the mind,
The body from the rod ;
Broken all chains that bind
The image of our God.

Just men no longer pine
Behind their prison-bars ;
Through the rent dungeon shine
The free sun and the stars. 20

Earth own, at last, untrod
By sect, or caste, or clan,
The fatherhood of God,
The brotherhood of man !

Fraud fail, craft perish, forth
The money-changers driven,
And God's will done on earth,
As now in heaven !

THE POOR VOTER ON ELECTION DAY

THE proudest now is but my peer,
 The highest not more high;
 To-day, of all the weary year,
 A king of men am I.
 To-day alike are great and small,
 The nameless and the known;
 My palace is the people's hall,
 The ballot-box my throne!

Who serves to-day upon the list
 Beside the served shall stand;
 Alike the brown and wrinkled fist,
 The gloved and dainty hand!
 The rich is level with the poor,
 The weak is strong to-day;
 And sleekest broadcloth counts no more
 Than homespun frock of grey.

10

To-day let pomp and vain pretence
 My stubborn right abide;
 I set a plain man's common sense
 Against the pedant's pride.
 To-day shall simple manhood try
 The strength of gold and land;
 The wide world has not wealth to buy
 The power in my right hand!

20

While there's a grief to seek redress,
 Or balance to adjust,
 Where weighs our living manhood less
 Than Mammon's vilest dust,—
 While there's a right to need my vote,
 A wrong to sweep away,
 Up! clouted knee and ragged coat!
 A man's a man to-day!

30

THE VOICES

“ WHY urge the long, unequal fight,
 Since Truth has fallen in the street,
 Or lift anew the trampled light,
 Quenched by the heedless million's feet ?

“ Give o'er the thankless task ; forsake
 The fools who know not ill from good :
 Eat, drink, enjoy thy own, and take
 Thine ease among the multitude.

“ Live out thyself ; with others share
 Thy proper life no more ; assume 10
 The unconcern of sun and air,
 For life or death, or blight or bloom.

“ The mountain pine looks calmly on
 The fires that scourge the plains below,
 Nor heeds the eagle in the sun
 The small birds piping in the snow !

“ The world is God's, not thine ; let Him
 Work out a change, if change must be :
 The hand that planted best can trim
 And nurse the old unfruitful tree.” 20

So spake the Tempter, when the light
 Of sun and stars had left the sky ;
 I listened, through the cloud and night,
 And heard, methought, a voice reply :

“ Thy task may well seem over-hard,
 Who scatterest in a thankless soil
 Thy life as seed, with no reward
 Save that which Duty gives to Toil.

“ Not wholly is thy heart resigned
 To Heaven's benign and just decree, 30
 Which, linking thee with all thy kind,
 Transmits their joys and griefs to thee.

“ Break off that sacred chain, and turn
 Back on thyself thy love and care;
 Be thou thine own mean idol, burn
 Faith, Hope, and Trust, thy children, there.

“ Released from that fraternal law
 Which shares the common bale and bliss,
 No sadder lot could Folly draw,
 Or Sin provoke from Fate, than this. 40

“ The meal unshared is food unblest :
 Thou hoard'st in vain what love should spend ;
 Self-ease is pain ; thy only rest
 Is labour for a worthy end ;

“ A toil that gains with what it yields,
 And scatters to its own increase,
 And hears, while sowing outward fields,
 The harvest-song of inward peace.

“ Free-lipped the liberal streamlets run,
 Free shines for all the healthful ray ; 50
 The still pool stagnates in the sun,
 The lurid earth-fire haunts decay !

“ What is it that the crowd requite
 Thy love with hate, thy truth with lies ?
 And but to faith, and not to sight,
 The walls of Freedom's temple rise ?

“ Yet do thy work ; it shall succeed
 In thine or in another's day ;
 And, if denied the victor's meed,
 Thou shalt not lack the toiler's pay. 60

“ Faith shares the future's promise ; Love's
 Self-offering is a triumph won ;
 And each good thought or action moves
 The dark world nearer to the sun.

“Then faint not, falter not, nor plead
Thy weakness; truth itself is strong;
The lion’s strength, the eagle’s speed,
Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong.

“Thy nature, which, through fire and flood,
To place or gain finds out its way, 70
Hath power to seek the highest good,
And duty’s holiest call obey!

“Strivest thou in darkness?—Foes without
In league with traitor thoughts within;
Thy night-watch kept with trembling Doubt
And pale Remorse the ghost of Sin?

“Hast thou not, on some week of storm,
Seen the sweet Sabbath breaking fair,
And cloud and shadow, sunlit, form
The curtains of its tent of prayer? 80

“So, haply, when thy task shall end,
The wrong shall lose itself in right,
And all thy week-day darkness blend
With the long Sabbath of the light!”

1854.

DISARMAMENT

“Put up the sword!” The voice of Christ once more
Speaks, in the pauses of the cannon’s roar,
O’er fields of corn by fiery sickles reaped
And left dry ashes; over trenches heaped
With nameless dead; o’er cities starving slow
Under a rain of fire; through wards of woe
Down which a groaning diapason runs
From tortured brothers, husbands, lovers, sons
Of desolate women in their far-off homes,
Waiting to hear the step that never comes! 10
O men and brothers! let that voice be heard.
War fails, try peace; put up the useless sword!

Fear not the end. There is a story told
 In Eastern tents, when autumn nights grow cold,
 And round the fire the Mongol shepherds sit
 With grave responses listening unto it:
 Once, on the errands of his mercy bent,
 Buddha, the holy and benevolent,
 Met a fell monster, huge and fierce of look,
 Whose awful voice the hills and forests shook. 20
 "O son of peace!" the giant cried, "thy fate
 Is sealed at last, and love shall yield to hate."

The unarmed Buddha looking, with no trace
 Of fear or anger, in the monster's face,
 In pity said: "Poor fiend, even thee I love."
 Lo! as he spake the sky-tall terror sank
 To hand-breadth size; the huge abhorrence shrank
 Into the form and fashion of a dove;
 And where the thunder of its rage was heard,
 Circling above him sweetly sang the bird: 30
 "Hate hath no harm for love," so ran the song;
 "And peace unweaponed conquers every wrong!"

1871.

POEMS SUBJECTIVE AND REMINISCENT

MEMORIES

A BEAUTIFUL and happy girl,
With step as light as summer air,
Eyes glad with smiles, and brow of pearl,
Shadowed by many a careless curl
Of unconfined and flowing hair;
A seeming child in everything,
Save thoughtful brow and ripening charms,
As Nature wears the smile of Spring
When sinking into Summer's arms.

A mind rejoicing in the light 10
Which melted through its graceful bower,
Leaf after leaf, dew-moist and bright,
And stainless in its holy white,
Unfolding like a morning flower:
A heart, which, like a fine-toned lute,
With every breath of feeling woke,
And, even when the tongue was mute,
From eye and lip in music spoke.

How thrills once more the lengthening chain
Of memory, at the thought of thee ! 20
Old hopes which long in dust have lain,
Old dreams, come thronging back again,
And boyhood lives again in me;
I feel its glow upon my cheek,
Its fullness of the heart is mine,
As when I leaned to hear thee speak,
Or raised my doubtful eye to thine.

I hear again thy low replies,
 I feel thy arm within my own,
 And timidly again uprise 30
 The fringed lids of hazel eyes,
 With soft brown tresses overblown.
 Ah ! memories of sweet summer eves,
 Of moonlit wave and willowy way,
 Of stars and flowers, and dewy leaves,
 And smiles and tones more dear than they !

Ere this, thy quiet eye hath smiled
 My picture of thy youth to see,
 When, half a woman, half a child,
 Thy very artlessness beguiled, 40
 And folly's self seemed wise in thee;
 I too can smile, when o'er that hour
 The lights of memory backward stream,
 Yet feel the while that manhood's power
 Is vainer than my boyhood's dream.

Years have passed on, and left their trace,
 Of graver care and deeper thought;
 And unto me the calm, cold face
 Of manhood, and to thee the grace 50
 Of woman's pensive beauty brought.
 More wide, perchance, for blame than praise,
 The school-boy's humble name has flown;
 Thine, in the green and quiet ways
 Of unobtrusive goodness known.

And wider yet in thought and deed
 Diverge our pathways, one in youth;
 Thine the Genevan's sternest creed,
 While answers to my spirit's need
 The Derby dalesman's simple truth. 60
 For thee, the priestly rite and prayer,
 And holy day, and solemn psalm;
 For me, the silent reverence where
 My brethren gather, slow and calm.

Yet hath thy spirit left on me
 An impress Time has worn not out,
 And something of myself in thee,
 A shadow from the past, I see,
 Lingerin', even yet, thy way about;
 Not wholly can the heart unlearn
 That lesson of its better hours,
 Not yet has Time's dull footstep worn
 To common dust that path of flowers.

70

Thus, while at times before our eyes
 The shadows melt, and fall apart,
 And, smiling through them, round us lies
 The warm light of our morning skies,—
 The Indian Summer of the heart !
 In secret sympathies of mind,
 In founts of feeling which retain
 Their pure, fresh flow, we yet may find
 Our early dreams not wholly vain !

80

1841.

EGO

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF A FRIEND.

On page of thine I cannot trace
 The cold and heartless commonplace,
 A statue's fixed and marble grace.

For ever as these lines I penned,
 Still with the thought of thee will blend
 That of some loved and common friend,

Who in life's desert track has made
 His pilgrim tent with mine, or strayed
 Beneath the same remembered shade.

And hence my pen unfettered moves
 In freedom which the heart approves,
 The negligence which friendship loves.

10

332 POEMS SUBJECTIVE AND REMINISCENT

And wilt thou prize my poor gift less
For simple air and rustic dress,
And sign of haste and carelessness ?

Oh, more than specious counterfeit
Of sentiment or studied wit,
A heart like thine should value it.

Yet half I fear my gift will be
Unto thy book, if not to thee, 20
Of more than doubtful courtesy.

A banished name from Fashion's sphere,
A lay unheard of Beauty's ear.
Forbid, disowned,—what do they here ?

Upon my ear not all in vain
Came the sad captive's clanking chain,
The groaning from his bed of pain.

And sadder still, I saw the woe
Which only wounded spirits know
When Pride's strong footsteps o'er them go. 30

Spurned not alone in walks abroad,
But from the temples of the Lord
Thrust out apart, like things abhorred.

Deep as I felt, and stern and strong,
In words which Prudence smothered long,
My soul spoke out against the wrong ;

Not mine alone the task to speak
Of comfort to the poor and weak,
And dry the tear on Sorrow's cheek ;

But, mingled in the conflict warm, 40
To pour the fiery breath of storm
Through the harsh trumpet of Reform ;

To brave Opinion's settled frown,
From ermined robe and saintly gown,
While wrestling revered Error down.

Founts gushed beside my pilgrim way,
Cool shadows on the greensward lay,
Flowers swung upon the bending spray.

And, broad and bright, on either hand,
Stretched the green slopes of Fairy-land, 50
With Hope's eternal sunbow spanned;

Whence voices called me like the flow,
Which on the listener's ear will grow,
Of forest streamlets soft and low.

And gentle eyes, which still retain
Their picture on the heart and brain,
Smiled, beckoning from that path of pain.

In vain ! nor dream, nor rest, nor pause
Remain for him who round him draws
The battered mail of Freedom's cause. 60

From youthful hopes, from each green spot
Of young Romance, and gentle Thought,
Where storm and tumult enter not;

From each fair altar, where belong
The offerings Love requires of Song
In homage to her bright-eyed throng;

With soul and strength, with heart and hand,
I turned to Freedom's struggling band,
To the sad Helots of our land.

What marvel then that Fame should turn 70
Her notes of praise to those of scorn;
Her gifts reclaimed, her smiles withdrawn ?

334 POEMS SUBJECTIVE AND REMINISCENT

What matters it ? a few years more,
Life's surge so restless heretofore
Shall break upon the unknown shore !

In that far land shall disappear
The shadows which we follow here,
The mist-wreaths of our atmosphere !

Before no work of mortal hand,
Of human will or strength expand
The pearl gates of the Better Land ;

80

Alone in that great love which gave
Life to the sleeper of the grave,
Resteth the power to seek and save.

Yet, if the spirit gazing through
The vista of the past can view
One deed to Heaven and virtue true ;

If through the wreck of wasted powers,
Of garlands wreathed from Folly's bowers,
Of idle aims and misspent hours,

90

The eye can note one sacred spot
By Pride and Self profanèd not,
A green place in the waste of thought,

Where deed or word hath rendered less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And Gratitude looks forth to bless ;

The simple burst of tenderest feeling
From sad hearts worn by evil-dealing,
For blessing on the hand of healing :

Better than Glory's pomp will be
That green and blessed spot to me,
A palm-shade in Eternity !

100

Something of Time which may invite
The purified and spiritual sight
To rest on with a calm delight.

And when the summer winds shall sweep
With their light wings my place of sleep,
And mosses round my headstone creep ;

If still, as Freedom's rallying sign,
Upon the young heart's altars shine
The very fires they caught from mine ;

110

If words my lips once uttered still,
In the calm faith and steadfast will
Of other hearts, their work fulfil ;

Perchance with joy the soul may learn
These tokens, and its eye discern
The fires which on those altars burn ;

A marvellous joy that even then,
The spirit hath its life again,
In the strong hearts of mortal men.

120

Take, lady, then, the gift I bring,
No gay and graceful offering,
No flower-smile of the laughing spring.

Midst the green buds of Youth's fresh May,
With Fancy's leaf-enwoven bay,
My sad and sombre gift I lay.

And if it deepens in thy mind
A sense of suffering human-kind,—
The outcast and the spirit-blind ;

Oppressed and spoiled on every side,
By Prejudice, and Scorn, and Pride,
Life's common courtesies denied ;

130

Sad mothers mourning o'er their trust,
 Children by want and misery nursed,
 Tasting life's bitter cup at first;

If to their strong appeals which come
 From fireless hearth, and crowded room,
 And the close alley's noisome gloom,—

Though dark the hands upraised to thee
 In mute beseeching agony, 140
 Thou lend'st thy woman's sympathy;

Not vainly on thy gentle shrine,
 Where Love, and Mirth, and Friendship twine
 Their varied gifts, I offer mine.

1843.

FORGIVENESS

MY heart was heavy, for its trust had been
 Abused, its kindness answered with foul wrong;
 So, turning gloomily from my fellow-men,
 One summer Sabbath day I strolled among
 The green mounds of the village burial-place;
 Where, pondering how all human love and hate
 Find one sad level: and how, soon or late,
 Wronged and wrongdoer, each with meekened face,
 And cold hands folded over a still heart,
 Pass the green threshold of our common grave, 10
 Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart,
 Awed for myself, and pitying my race,
 Our common sorrow, like a mighty wave,
 Swept all my pride away, and trembling I forgave!

1846.

MY THANKS

ACCOMPANYING MANUSCRIPTS PRESENTED TO A FRIEND.

'Tis said that in the Holy Land
 The angels of the place have blessed
 The pilgrim's bed of desert sand,
 Like Jacob's stone of rest.

That down the hush of Syrian skies
Some sweet-voiced saint at twilight sings
The song whose holy symphonies
Are beat by unseen wings;

Till starting from his sandy bed,
The wayworn wanderer looks to see 10
The halo of an angel's head
Shine through the tamarisk-tree.

So through the shadows of my way
Thy smile hath fallen soft and clear,
So at the weary close of day
Hath seemed thy voice of cheer.

That pilgrim pressing to his goal
May pause not for the vision's sake,
Yet all fair things within his soul
The thought of it shall wake: 20

The graceful palm-tree by the well,
Seen on the far horizon's rim;
The dark eyes of the fleet gazelle,
Bent timidly on him;

Each pictured saint, whose golden hair
Streams sunlike through the convent's gloom;
Pale shrines of martyrs young and fair,
And loving Mary's tomb;

And thus each tint or shade which falls,
From sunset cloud or waving tree, 30
Along my pilgrim path, recalls
The pleasant thought of thee.

Of one in sun and shade the same,
In weal and woe my steady friend,
Whatever by that holy name
The angels comprehend.

338 POEMS SUBJECTIVE AND REMINISCENT

Not blind to faults and follies, thou
 Hast never failed the good to see,
 Nor judged by one unseemly bough
 The upward-struggling tree. 40

These light leaves at thy feet I lay,—
 Poor common thoughts on common things,
 Which Time is shaking, day by day,
 Like feathers from his wings;

Chance shootings from a frail life-tree,
 To nurturing care but little known,
 Their good was partly learned of thee,
 Their folly is my own.

That tree still clasps the kindly mould,
 Its leaves still drink the twilight dew, 50
 And weaving its pale green with gold,
 Still shines the sunlight through.

There still the morning zephyrs play,
 And there at times the spring bird sings,
 And mossy trunk and fading spray
 Are flowered with glossy wings.

Yet, even in genial sun and rain,
 Root, branch, and leaflet fail and fade;
 The wanderer on its lonely plain
 Ere long shall miss its shade. 60

O friend beloved, whose curious skill
 Keeps bright the last year's leaves and flowers,
 With warm, glad, summer thoughts to fill
 The cold, dark, winter hours !

Pressed on thy heart, the leaves I bring
 May well defy the wintry cold,
 Until, in Heaven's eternal spring,
 Life's fairer ones unfold.

MY NAMESAKE

Addressed to Francis Greenleaf Allinson of Burlington, N.J.

YOU scarcely need my tardy thanks,
 Who, self-rewarded, nurse and tend—
 A green leaf on your own Green Banks—
 The memory of your friend.

For me, no wreath, bloom-woven, hides
 The sobered brow and lessening hair :
 For aught I know, the myrtled sides
 Of Helicon are bare.

Their scallop-shells so many bring
 The fabled founts of song to try, 10
 They've drained, for aught I know, the spring
 Of Aganippe dry.

Ah well !—The wreath the Muses braid
 Proves often Folly's cap and bell ;
 Methinks, my ample beaver's shade
 May serve my turn as well.

Let Love's and Friendship's tender debt
 Be paid by those I love in life.
 Why should the unborn critic whet
 For me his scalping-knife ? 20

Why should the stranger peer and pry
 One's vacant house of life about,
 And drag for curious ear and eye
 His faults and follies out ?—

Why stuff, for fools to gaze upon,
 With chaff of words, the garb he wore,
 As corn-husks when the ear is gone
 Are rustled all the more ?

Let kindly Silence close again,
 The picture vanish from the eye, 30
 And on the dim and misty main
 Let the small ripple die.

Yet not the less I own your claim
 To grateful thanks, dear friends of mine.
 Hang, if it please you so, my name
 Upon your household line.

Let Fame from brazen lips blow wide
 Her chosen names, I envy none:
 A mother's love, a father's pride,
 Shall keep alive my own ! 40

Still shall that name as now recall
 The young leaf wet with morning dew,
 The glory where the sunbeams fall
 The breezy woodlands through.

That name shall be a household word,
 A spell to waken smile or sigh;
 In many an evening prayer be heard
 And cradle lullaby.

And thou, dear child, in riper days
 When asked the reason of thy name, 50
 Shalt answer: " One 'twere vain to praise
 Or censure bore the same.

" Some blamed him, some believed him good,
 The truth lay doubtless 'twixt the two;
 He reconciled as best he could
 Old faith and fancies new.

" In him the grave and playful mixed,
 And wisdom held with folly truce,
 And Nature compromised betwixt
 Good fellow and recluse. 60

“ He loved his friends, forgave his foes ;
And, if his words were harsh at times,
He spared his fellow-men,—his blows
Fell only on their crimes.

“ He loved the good and wise, but found
His human heart to all akin
Who met him on the common ground
Of suffering and of sin.

“ Whate’er his neighbours might endure
Of pain or grief his own became ;
For all the ills he could not cure
He held himself to blame.

70

“ His good was mainly an intent,
His evil not of forethought done ;
The work he wrought was rarely meant
Or finished as begun.

“ Ill served his tides of feeling strong
To turn the common mills of use ;
And, over restless wings of song,
His birthright garb hung loose !

80

“ His eye was beauty’s powerless slave,
And his the ear which discord pains ;
Few guessed beneath his aspect grave
What passions strove in chains.

“ He had his share of care and pain,
No holiday was life to him ;
Still in the heirloom cup we drain
The bitter drop will swim.

“ Yet Heaven was kind, and here a bird
And there a flower beguiled his way ;
And, cool, in summer noons, he heard
The fountains plash and play.

90

“ On all his sad or restless moods
 The patient peace of Nature stole;
 The quiet of the fields and woods
 Sank deep into his soul.

“ He worshipped as his fathers did,
 And kept the faith of childish days,
 And, howsoe’er he strayed or slid,
 He loved the good old ways.

100

“ The simple tastes, the kindly traits,
 The tranquil air, and gentle speech,
 The silence of the soul that waits
 For more than man to teach.

“ The cant of party, school, and sect,
 Provoked at times his honest scorn,
 And Folly, in its grey respect,
 He tossed on satire’s horn.

“ But still his heart was full of awe
 And reverence for all sacred things;
 And, brooding over form and law,
 He saw the Spirit’s wings !

110

“ Life’s mystery wrapt him like a cloud;
 He heard far voices mock his own,
 The sweep of wings unseen, the loud,
 Long roll of waves unknown.

“ The arrows of his straining sight
 Fell quenched in darkness : priest and sage,
 Like lost guides calling left and right,
 Perplexed his doubtful age.

120

“ Like childhood, listening for the sound
 Of its dropped pebbles in the well,
 All vainly down the dark profound
 His brief-lined plummet fell.

“ So, scattering flowers with pious pains
On old beliefs, of later creeds,
Which claimed a place in Truth’s domains,
He asked the title-deeds.

“ He saw the old-time’s groves and shrines
In the long distance fair and dim; 130
And heard, like sound of far-off pines,
The century-mellowed hymn !

“ He dared not mock the Dervish whirl,
The Brahmin’s rite, the Lama’s spell;
God knew the heart; Devotion’s pearl
Might sanctify the shell.

“ While others trod the altar stairs
He faltered like the publican;
And, while they praised as saints, his prayers
Were those of sinful man. 140

“ For, awed by Sinai’s Mount of Law,
The trembling faith alone sufficed,
That, through its cloud and flame, he saw
The sweet, sad face of Christ !

“ And listening, with his forehead bowed,
Heard the Divine compassion fill
The pauses of the trump and cloud
With whispers small and still.

“ The words he spake, the thoughts he penned,
Are mortal as his hand and brain, 150
But, if they served the Master’s end,
He has not lived in vain !”

Heaven make thee better than thy name,
Child of my friends !—For thee I crave
What riches never bought, nor fame
To mortal longing gave.

I pray the prayer of Plato old :
 God make thee beautiful within,
 And let thine eyes the good behold
 In everything save sin ! 160

Imagination held in check
 To serve, not rule, thy poisèd mind ;
 Thy Reason, at the frown or beck
 Of Conscience, loose or bind.

No dreamer thou, but real all,—
 Strong manhood crowning vigorous youth ;
 Life made by duty epical
 And rhythmic with the truth.

So shall that life the fruitage yield
 Which trees of healing only give, 170
 And green-leafed in the Eternal field
 Of God, for ever live !

1853.

THE BAREFOOT BOY

BLESSINGS on thee, little man,
 Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan !
 With thy turned-up pantaloons,
 And thy merry whistled tunes ;
 With thy red lip, redder still
 Kissed by strawberries on the hill ;
 With the sunshine on thy face,
 Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace ;
 From my heart I give thee joy,—
 I was once a barefoot boy ! 180
 Prince thou art,—the grown-up man
 Only is republican.
 Let the million-dollared ride !
 Barefoot, trudging at his side.
 Thou hast more than he can buy
 In the reach of ear and eye.—
 Outward sunshine, inward joy :
 Blessings on thee, barefoot boy !

Oh for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day, 20
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young, 30
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of grey hornet artisans!
For, eschewing books and tasks, 40
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy.—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees, 50
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night.

Whispering at the garden wall,
 Talked with me from fall to fall;
 Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond, 60
 Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
 Mine, on bending orchard trees,
 Apples of Hesperides !
 Still as my horizon grew,
 Larger grew my riches too;
 All the world I saw or knew
 Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
 Fashioned for a barefoot boy !

Oh for festal dainties spread,
 Like my bowl of milk and bread; 70
 Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
 On the door-stone, grey and rude !
 O'er me, like a regal tent,
 Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
 Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
 Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
 While for music came the play
 Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
 And, to light the noisy choir,
 Lit the fly his lamp of fire. 80
 I was monarch: pomp and joy
 Waited on the barefoot boy !

Cheerily, then, my little man,
 Live and laugh, as boyhood can !
 Though the flinty slopes be hard,
 Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
 Every morn shall lead thee through
 Fresh baptisms of the dew;
 Every evening from thy feet
 Shall the cool wind kiss the heat: 90
 All too soon these feet must hide
 In the prison cells of pride,
 Lose the freedom of the sod,
 Like a colt's for work be shod,

Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin. 100
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

1855.

MY PSALM

I MOURN no more my vanished years:
 Beneath a tender rain,
An April rain of smiles and tears,
 My heart is young again.

The west-winds blow, and, singing low,
 I hear the glad streams run;
The windows of my soul I throw
 Wide open to the sun.

No longer forward nor behind
 I look in hope or fear; 10
But, grateful, take the good I find,
 The best of now and here.

I plough no more a desert land,
 To harvest weed and tare;
The manna dropping from God's hand
 Rebukes my painful care.

I break my pilgrim staff, I lay
 Aside the toiling oar;
The angel sought so far away
 I welcome at my door. 20

The airs of spring may never play
 Among the ripening corn,
Nor freshness of the flowers of May
 Blow through the autumn morn;

Yet shall the blue-eyed gentian look
 Through fringed lids to heaven,
 And the pale aster in the brook
 Shall see its image given;—

The woods shall wear their robes of praise,
 The south-wind softly sigh, 30
 And sweet, calm days in golden haze
 Melt down the amber sky.

Not less shall manly deed and word
 Rebuke an age of wrong;
 The graven flowers that wreath the sword
 Make not the blade less strong.

But smiting hands shall learn to heal,—
 To build as to destroy;
 Nor less my heart for others feel
 That I the more enjoy. 40

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
 To give or to withhold,
 And knoweth more of all my needs
 Than all my prayers have told!

Enough that blessings undeserved
 Have marked my erring track;
 That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved,
 His chastening turned me back;

That more and more a Providence
 Of love is understood, 50
 Making the springs of time and sense
 Sweet with eternal good;—

That death seems but a covered way
 Which opens into light,
 Wherein no blinded child can stray
 Beyond the Father's sight;

That care and trial seem at last,
 Through Memory's sunset air,
 Like mountain-ranges overpast,
 In purple distance fair; 60

That all the jarring notes of life
 Seem blending in a psalm,
 And all the angles of its strife,
 Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,
 And so the west-winds play;
 And all the windows of my heart
 I open to the day.

1859.

THE WAITING

I WAIT and watch: before my eyes
 Methinks the night grows thin and grey;
 I wait and watch the eastern skies
 To see the golden spears arise
 Beneath the oriflamme of day!

Like one whose limbs are bound in trance
 I hear the day-sounds swell and grow,
 And see across the twilight glance,
 Troop after troop, in swift advance,
 The shining ones with plumes of snow! 10

I know the errand of their feet,
 I know what mighty work is theirs;
 I can but lift up hands unmeet,
 The threshing-floors of God to beat,
 And speed them with unworthy prayers.

I will not dream in vain despair
 The steps of progress wait for me:
 The puny leverage of a hair
 The planet's impulse well may spare,
 A drop of dew the tided sea. 20

The loss, if loss there be, is mine,
 And yet not mine if understood;
 For one shall grasp and one resign,
 One drink life's rue, and one its wine,
 And God shall make the balance good.

Oh power to do ! Oh baffled will !
 Oh prayer and action ! ye are one.
 Who may not strive, may yet fulfil
 The harder task of standing still,
 And good but wished with God is done ! 30

1862.

SNOW-BOUND

A WINTER IDYL.

"As the Spirits of Darkness be stronger in the dark, so Good Spirits, which be Angels of Light, are augmented not only by the Divine light of the Sun, but also by our common Wood Fire: and as the Celestial Fire drives away dark spirits, so also this our fire of Wood doth the same."—COR. AGRIPPA, *Occult Philosophy*, Book I., ch. v.

"Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
 Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
 Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
 Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,
 And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
 The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
 Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
 Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
 In a tumultuous privacy of storm."

EMERSON. *The Snow Storm.*

THE sun that brief December day
 Rose cheerless over hills of grey,
 And, darkly circled, gave at noon
 A sadder light than waning moon.
 Slow tracing down the thickening sky
 Its mute and ominous prophecy,
 A portent seeming less than threat,
 It sank from sight before it set.
 A chill no coat, however stout,
 Of homespun stuff could quite shut out, 10

A hard, dull bitterness of cold,
That checked, mid-vein, the circling race
Of life-blood in the sharpened face,
The coming of the snow-storm told.
The wind blew east; we heard the roar
Of Ocean on his wintry shore,
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there
Beat with low rhythm our inland air.
Meanwhile we did our nightly chores,—
Brought in the wood from out of doors, 20
Littered the stalls, and from the mows
Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows:
Heard the horse whinnying for his corn;
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,
Impatient down the stanchion rows
The cattle shake their walnut bows;
While, peering from his early perch
Upon the scaffold's pole of birch,
The cock his crested helmet bent
And down his querulous challenge sent. 30

Unwarmed by any sunset light
The grey day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,
As zigzag, wavering to and fro,
Crossed and recrossed the winged snow:
And ere the early bedtime came
The white drift piled the window-frame,
And through the glass the clothes-line posts
Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts. 40

So all night long the storm roared on:
The morning broke without a sun;
In tiny spherule traced with lines
Of Nature's geometric signs,
In starry flake, and pellicle,
All day the hoary meteor fell;
And, when the second morning shone,
We looked upon a world unknown,
On nothing we could call our own.

Around the glistening wonder bent 50
 The blue walls of the firmament,
 No cloud above, no earth below,—
 A universe of sky and snow !
 The old familiar sights of ours
 Took marvellous shapes ; strange domes and towers
 Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,
 Or garden-wall, or belt of wood ;
 A smooth white mound the brush-pile showed,
 A fenceless drift what once was road ;
 The bridle-post an old man sat 60
 With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat ;
 The well-curb had a Chinese roof ;
 And even the long sweep, high aloof,
 In its slant splendour, seemed to tell
 Of Pisa's leaning miracle.

A prompt, decisive man, no breath
 Our father wasted : " Boys, a path !"
 Well pleased, (for when did farmer boy
 Count such a summons less than joy ?)
 Our buskins on our feet we drew : 70
 With mittened hands, and caps drawn low,
 To guard our necks and ears from snow,
 We cut the solid whiteness through.
 And, where the drift was deepest, made
 A tunnel walled and overlaid
 With dazzling crystal : we had read
 Of rare Aladdin's wondrous cave,
 And to our own his name we gave,
 With many a wish the luck were ours
 To test his lamp's supernal powers. 80
 We reached the barn with merry din,
 And roused the prisoned brutes within.
 The old horse thrust his long head out,
 And grave with wonder gazed about ;
 The cock his lusty greeting said,
 And forth his speckled harem led :
 The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked.
 And mild reproach of hunger looked ;

The hornëd patriarch of the sheep,
 Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep, 90
 Shook his sage head with gesture mute,
 And emphasized with stamp of foot.

All day the gusty north-wind bore
 The loosening drift its breath before;
 Low circling round its southern zone,
 The sun through dazzling snow-mist shone.
 No church-bell lent its Christian tone
 To the savage air, no social smoke
 Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.

A solitude made more intense 100

By dreary-voicëd elements,
 The shrieking of the mindless wind,
 The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,
 And on the glass the unmeaning beat
 Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet.

Beyond the circle of our hearth
 No welcome sound of toil or mirth
 Unbound the spell, and testified
 Of human life and thought outside.

We minded that the sharpest ear 110

The buried brooklet could not hear,
 The music of whose liquid lip
 Had been to us companionship,
 And, in our lonely life, had grown
 To have an almost human tone.

As night drew on, and, from the crest
 Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,
 The sun, a snow-blown traveller, sank
 From sight beneath the smothering bank,
 We piled, with care, our nightly stack 120

Of wood against the chimney-back,—
 The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,
 And on its top the stout back-stick;
 The knotty forestick laid apart,
 And filled between with curious art
 The ragged brush; then, hovering near,
 We watched the first red blaze appear,

Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
 On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
 Until the old, rude-furnished room 130
 Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;
 While radiant with a mimic flame
 Outside the sparkling drift became,
 And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree
 Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free.
 The crane and pendent trammels showed,
 The Turks' heads on the andirons glowed;
 While childish fancy, prompt to tell
 The meaning of the miracle,
 Whispered the old rhyme: "*Under the tree,* 140
When fire outdoors burns merrily,
There the witches are making tea."

The moon above the eastern wood
 Shone at its full; the hill-range stood
 Transfigured in the silver flood,
 Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,
 Dead white, save where some sharp ravine
 Took shadow, or the sombre green
 Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black
 Against the whiteness at their back. 150
 For such a world and such a night
 Most fitting that unwarming light,
 Which only seemed where'er it fell
 To make the coldness visible.

Shut in from all the world without,
 We sat the clean-winged hearth about,
 Content to let the north-wind roar
 In baffled rage at pane and door,
 While the red logs before us beat
 The frost-line back with tropic heat; 160
 And ever, when a louder blast
 Shook beam and rafter as it passed,
 The merrier up its roaring draught
 The great throat of the chimney laughed;

The house-dog on his paws outspread
 Laid to the fire his drowsy head.
 The cat's dark silhouette on the wall
 A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;
 And, for the winter fireside meet,
 Between the andirons' straddling feet, 170
 The mug of cider simmered slow,
 The apples sputtered in a row,
 And, close at hand, the basket stood
 With nuts from brown October's wood.

What matter how the night behaved ?
 What matter how the north-wind raved ?
 Blow high, blow low, not all its snow
 Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.
 O Time and Change !—with hair as grey
 As was my sire's that winter day, 180
 How strange it seems, with so much gone
 Of life and love, to still live on !
 Ah, brother ! only I and thou
 Are left of all that circle now,—
 The dear home faces whereupon
 That fitful firelight paled and shone.
 Henceforward, listen as we will,
 The voices of that hearth are still;
 Look where we may, the wide earth o'er
 Those lighted faces smile no more. 190
 We tread the paths their feet have worn,
 We sit beneath their orchard trees,
 We hear, like them, the hum of bees
 And rustle of the bladed corn;
 We turn the pages that they read,
 Their written words we linger o'er,
 But in the sun they cast no shade,
 No voice is heard, no sign is made,
 No step is on the conscious floor !
 Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust, 200
 (Since He who knows our need is just,)

That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.

Alas for him who never sees
 The stars shine through his cypress-trees !
 Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
 Nor looks to see the breaking day
 Across the mournful marbles play !
 Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
 The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
 That Life is ever lord of Death, 210
 And Love can never lose its own !

We sped the time with stories old,
 Wrought puzzles out, and riddles told,
 Or stammered from our school-book lore
 "The Chief of Gambia's golden shore."
 How often since, when all the land
 Was clay in Slavery's shaping hand,
 As if a far-blown trumpet stirred
 The languorous sin-sick air, I heard:
 "*Does not the voice of reason cry,* 220
 Claim the first right which Nature gave,
From the red scourge of bondage fly,
 Nor deign to live a burdened slave !"

Our father rode again his ride
 On Memphremagog's wooded side ;
 Sat down again to moose and samp
 In trapper's hut and Indian camp ;
 Lived o'er the old idyllic ease
 Beneath St. François' hemlock-trees ;
 Again for him the moonlight shone 230
 On Norman cap and bodiced zone ;
 Again he heard the violin play
 Which led the village dance away,
 And mingled in its merry whirl
 The grandam and the laughing girl.
 Or, nearer home, our steps he led
 Where Salisbury's level marshes spread
 Mile-wide as flies the laden bee ;
 Where merry mowers, hale and strong,
 Swept, scythe on scythe, their swaths along
 The low green prairies of the sea. 241

We shared the fishing off Boar's Head,
And round the rocky Isles of Shoals
The hake-broil on the drift-wood coals;
The chowder on the sand-beach made,
Dipped by the hungry, steaming hot,
With spoons of clam-shell from the pot.
We heard the tales of witchcraft old,
And dream and sign and marvel told
To sleepy listeners as they lay 250
Stretched idly on the salted hay,
Adrift along the winding shores,
When favouring breezes deigned to blow
The square sail of the gundelow
And idle lay the useless oars.

Our mother, while she turned her wheel
Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,
Told how the Indian hordes came down
At midnight on Coheco town,
And how her own great-uncle bore 260
His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.
Recalling, in her fitting phrase,
So rich and picturesque and free,
(The common unrhymed poetry
Of simple life and country ways,)
The story of her early days,—
She made us welcome to her home;
Old hearths grew wide to give us room;
We stole with her a frightened look
At the grey wizard's conjuring-book, 270
The fame whereof went far and wide
Through all the simple country side;
We heard the hawks at twilight play,
The boat-horn on Piscataqua,
The loon's weird laughter far away;
We fished her little trout-brook, knew
What flowers in wood and meadow grew,
What sunny hillsides autumn-brown
She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,

Saw where in sheltered cove and bay 280
 The ducks' black squadron anchored lay,
 And heard the wild-geese calling loud
 Beneath the grey November cloud.

Then, haply, with a look more grave,
 And soberer tone, some tale she gave
 From painful Sewell's ancient tome,
 Beloved in every Quaker home,
 Of faith fire-winged by martyrdom,
 Or Chalkley's Journal, old and quaint,—
 Gentlest of skippers, rare sea-saint!— 290
 Who, when the dreary calms prevailed,
 And water-butt and bread-cask failed,
 And cruel, hungry eyes pursued
 His portly presence mad for food,
 With dark hints muttered under breath
 Of casting lots for life or death,
 Offered, if Heaven withheld supplies,
 To be himself the sacrifice.
 Then, suddenly, as if to save
 The good man from his living grave, 300
 A ripple on the water grew.
 A school of porpoise flashed in view.
 "Take, eat," he said, "and be content;
 These fishes in my stead are sent
 By Him who gave the tangled ram
 To spare the child of Abraham."

Our uncle, innocent of books,
 Was rich in lore of fields and brooks,
 The ancient teachers never dumb
 Of Nature's unhoused lyceum. 310
 In moons and tides and weather wise,
 He read the clouds as prophecies,
 And foul or fair could well divine,
 By many an occult hint and sign,
 Holding the cunning-warded keys
 To all the woodcraft mysteries;

Himself to Nature's heart so near
That all her voices in his ear
Of beast or bird had meanings clear,
Like Apollonius of old, 320
Who knew the tales the sparrows told,
Or Hermes who interpreted
What the sage cranes of Nilus said;
Content to live where life began;
A simple, guileless, childlike man,
Strong only on his native grounds,
The little world of sights and sounds
Whose girdle was the parish bounds,
Whereof his fondly partial pride
The common features magnified, 330
As Surrey hills to mountains grew
In White of Selborne's loving view,—
He told how teal and loon he shot,
And how the eagle's eggs he got,
The feats on pond and river done,
The prodigies of rod and gun;
Till, warming with the tales he told,
Forgotten was the outside cold,
The bitter wind unheeded blew,
From ripening corn the pigeons flew, 340
The partridge drummed i' the wood, the mink
Went fishing down the river-brink.
In fields with bean or clover gay,
The woodchuck, like a hermit grey,
Peered from the doorway of his cell;
The muskrat plied the mason's trade,
And tier by tier his mud-walls laid;
And from the shagbark overhead
The grizzled squirrel dropped his shell.

Next, the dear aunt, whose smile of cheer 350
And voice in dreams I see and hear,—
The sweetest woman ever Fate
Perverse denied a household mate,
Who, lonely, homeless, not the less
Found peace in love's unselfishness,

And welcome wheresoe'er she went,
 A calm and gracious element,
 Whose presence seemed the sweet income
 And womanly atmosphere of home,—
 Called up her girlhood memories, 360
 The huskings and the apple-bees.
 The sleigh-rides and the summer sails,
 Weaving through all the poor details
 And homespun warp of circumstance
 A golden woof-thread of romance.
 For well she kept her genial mood
 And simple faith of maidenhood;
 Before her still a cloud-land lay,
 The mirage loomed across her way;
 The morning dew, that dries so soon 370
 With others, glistened at her noon;
 Through years of toil and soil and care,
 From glossy tress to thin grey hair,
 All unprofaned she held apart
 The virgin fancies of the heart.
 Be shame to him of woman born
 Who hath for such but thought of scorn.

There, too, our elder sister plied
 Her evening task the stand beside;
 A full, rich nature, free to trust, 380
 Truthful and almost sternly just,
 Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,
 And make her generous thought a fact,
 Keeping with many a light disguise
 The secret of self-sacrifice.
 O heart sore-tried ! thou hast the best
 That Heaven itself could give thee.— rest,
 Rest from all bitter thoughts and things !
 How many a poor one's blessing went
 With thee beneath the low green tent 390
 Whose curtain never outward swings !

As one who held herself a part
 Of all she saw, and let her heart

Against the household bosom lean,
Upon the motley-braided mat
Our youngest and our dearest sat,
Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,
Now bathed in the unfading green
And holy peace of Paradise.
Oh, looking from some heavenly hill, 400
Or from the shade of saintly palms,
Or silver reach of river calms,
Do those large eyes behold me still ?
With me one little year ago :—
The chill weight of the winter snow
For months upon her grave has lain ;
And now, when summer south-winds blow
And brier and harebell bloom again,
I tread the pleasant paths we trod,
I see the violet-sprinkled sod 410
Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak
The hillside flowers she loved to seek,
Yet following me where'er I went
With dark eyes full of love's content.
The birds are glad ; the brier-rose fills
The air with sweetness ; all the hills
Stretch green to June's unclouded sky ;
But still I wait with ear and eye
For something gone which should be nigh,
A loss in all familiar things, 420
In flower that blooms, and bird that sings.
And yet, dear heart ! remembering thee,
Am I not richer than of old ?
Safe in thy immortality,
What change can reach the wealth I hold ?
What chance can mar the pearl and gold
Thy love hath left in trust with me ?
And while in life's late afternoon,
Where cool and long the shadows grow,
I walk to meet the night that soon 430
Shall shape and shadow overflow,
I cannot feel that thou art far,
Since near at need the angels are ;

And when the sunset gates unbar,
 Shall I not see thee waiting stand,
 And, white against the evening star,
 The welcome of thy beckoning hand ?

Brisk wielder of the birch and rule,
 The master of the district school
 Held at the fire his favoured place, 440
 Its warm glow lit a laughing face
 Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared
 The uncertain prophecy of beard.
 He teased the mitten-blinded cat,
 Played cross-pins on my uncle's hat,
 Sang songs, and told us what befalls
 In classic Dartmouth's college halls.
 Born the wild Northern hills among,
 From whence his yeoman father wrung
 By patient toil subsistence scant, 450
 Not competence and yet not want,
 He early gained the power to pay
 His cheerful, self-reliant way;
 Could doff at ease his scholar's gown
 To peddle wares from town to town;
 Or through the long vacation's reach
 In lonely lowland districts teach,
 Where all the droll experience found
 At stranger hearths in boarding round.
 The moonlit skater's keen delight, 460
 The sleigh-drive through the frosty night,
 The rustic party, with its rough
 Accompaniment of blind-man's-buff.
 And whirling-plate, and forfeits paid,
 His winter task a pastime made.
 Happy the snow-locked homes wherein
 He tuned his merry violin,
 Or played the athlete in the barn,
 Or held the good dame's winding-yarn,
 Or mirth-provoking versions told 470
 Of classic legends rare and old,
 Wherein the scenes of Greece and Rome
 Had all the commonplace of home.

And little seemed at best the odds
 'Twixt Yankee pedlars and old gods;
 Where Pindus-born Arachthus took
 The guise of any grist-mill brook,
 And dread Olympus at his will
 Became a huckleberry hill.

A careless boy that night he seemed; 480
 But at his desk he had the look
 And air of one who wisely schemed,
 And hostage from the future took
 In trained thought and lore of book.
 Large-brained, clear-eyed, of such as he
 Shall Freedom's young apostles be,
 Who, following in War's bloody trail,
 Shall every lingering wrong assail;
 All chains from limb and spirit strike,
 Uplift the black and white alike; 490
 Scatter before their swift advance
 The darkness and the ignorance,
 The pride, the lust, the squalid sloth,
 Which nurtured Treason's monstrous growth,
 Made murder pastime, and the hell
 Of prison-torture possible;
 The cruel lie of caste refute,
 Old forms remould, and substitute
 For Slavery's lash the freeman's will,
 For blind routine, wise-handed skill; 500
 A school-house plant on every hill.
 Stretching in radiate nerve-lines thence
 The quick wires of intelligence;
 Till North and South together brought
 Shall own the same electric thought,
 In peace a common flag salute.
 And, side by side in labour's free
 And unresentful rivalry,
 Harvest the fields wherein they fought.

Another guest that winter night 510
 Flashed back from lustrous eyes the light.

Unmarked by time, and yet not young,
 The honeyed music of her tongue
 And words of meekness scarcely told
 A nature passionate and bold,
 Strong, self-concentred, spurning guide,
 Its milder features dwarfed beside
 Her unbent will's majestic pride.
 She sat among us, at the best,
 A not unfeared, half-welcome guest, 520
 Rebuking with her cultured phrase
 Our homeliness of words and ways.
 A certain pard-like, treacherous grace
 Swayed the lithe limbs and dropped the lash,
 Lent the white teeth their dazzling flash;
 And under low brows, black with night,
 Rayed out at times a dangerous light;
 The sharp heat-lightnings of her face
 Presaging ill to him whom Fate
 Condemned to share her love or hate. 530
 A woman tropical, intense
 In thought and act, in soul and sense,
 She blended in a like degree
 The vixen and the devotee,
 Revealing with each freak or feint
 The temper of Petruchio's Kate,
 The raptures of Siena's saint.
 Her tapering hand and rounded wrist
 Had facile power to form a fist;
 The warm, dark languish of her eyes 540
 Was never safe from wrath's surprise.
 Brows saintly calm and lips devout
 Knew every change of scowl and pout;
 And the sweet voice had notes more high
 And shrill for social battle-cry.
 Since then what old cathedral town
 Has missed her pilgrim staff and gown,
 What convent-gate has held its lock
 Against the challenge of her knock?
 Through Smyrna's plague-hushed thoroughfares,
 Up sea-set Malta's rocky stairs, 551

Grey olive slopes of hills that hem
 Thy tombs and shrines, Jerusalem,
 Or startling on her desert throne
 The crazy Queen of Lebanon
 With claims fantastic as her own,
 Her tireless feet have held their way;
 And still, unrestful, bowed, and grey,
 She watches under Eastern skies,
 With hope each day renewed and fresh, 560
 The Lord's quick coming in the flesh,
 Whereof she dreams and prophecies !

Where'er her troubled path may be,
 The Lord's sweet pity with her go !
 The outward wayward life we see,
 The hidden springs we may not know.
 Nor is it given us to discern
 What threads the fatal sisters spun,
 Through what ancestral years has run
 The sorrow with the woman born, 570
 What forged her cruel chain of moods,
 What set her feet in solitudes,
 And held the love within her mute,
 What mingled madness in the blood,
 A life-long discord and annoy,
 Water of tears with oil of joy,
 And hid within the folded bud
 Perversities of flower and fruit.
 It is not ours to separate
 The tangled skein of will and fate, 580
 To show what metes and bounds should stand
 Upon the soul's debatable land,
 And between choice and Providence
 Divide the circle of events;
 But He who knows our frame is just,
 Merciful and compassionate,
 And full of sweet assurances
 And hope for all the language is,
 That He remembereth we are dust !

At last the great logs, crumbling low, 590
 Sent out a dull and duller glow,
 The bull's-eye watch that hung in view,
 Ticking its weary circuit through,
 Pointed with mutely warning sign
 Its black hand to the hour of nine.
 That sign the pleasant circle broke:
 My uncle ceased his pipe to smoke,
 Knocked from its bowl the refuse grey.
 And laid it tenderly away;
 Then roused himself to safely cover 600
 The dull red brands with ashes over.
 And while, with care, our mother laid
 The work aside, her steps she stayed
 One moment, seeking to express
 Her grateful sense of happiness
 For food and shelter, warmth and health.
 And love's contentment more than wealth.
 With simple wishes (not the weak,
 Vain prayers which no fulfilment seek,
 But such as warm the generous heart, 610
 O'er-prompt to do with Heaven its part)
 That none might lack, that bitter night.
 For bread and clothing, warmth and light.

Within our beds awhile we heard
 The wind that round the gables roared,
 With now and then a ruder shock,
 Which made our very bedsteads rock.
 We heard the loosened clapboards tost.
 The board-nails snapping in the frost;
 And on us, through the unplastered wall, 620
 Felt the light sifted snow-flakes fall.
 But sleep stole on, as sleep will do
 When hearts are light and life is new;
 Faint and more faint the murmurs grew,
 Till in the summer-land of dreams
 They softened to the sound of streams,
 Low stir of leaves, and dip of oars,
 And lapsing waves on quiet shores.

Next morn we wakened with the shout
Of merry voices high and clear; 630
And saw the teamsters drawing near
To break the drifted highways out.
Down the long hillside treading slow
We saw the half-buried oxen go,
Shaking the snow from heads uptost,
Their straining nostrils white with frost.
Before our door the straggling train
Drew up, an added team to gain.
The elders threshed their hands a-cold,
Passed, with the cider-mug, their jokes 640
From lip to lip; the younger folks
Down the loose snow-banks, wrestling, rolled,
Then toiled again the cavalcade
O'er windy hill, through clogged ravine,
And woodland paths that wound between
Low drooping pine-boughs winter-weighed.
From every barn a team afoot,
At every house a new recruit,
Where, drawn by Nature's subtlest law,
Haply the watchful young men saw 650
Sweet doorway pictures of the curls
And curious eyes of merry girls.
Lifting their hands in mock defence
Against the snow-ball's compliments,
And reading in each missive tost
The charm with Eden never lost.
We heard once more the sleigh-bells' sound;
And, following where the teamsters led,
The wise old Doctor went his round,
Just pausing at our door to say, 660
In the brief autocratic way
Of one who, prompt at Duty's call,
Was free to urge her claim on all,
That some poor neighbour sick abed
At night our mother's aid would need.
For, one in generous thought and deed,
What mattered in the sufferer's sight
The Quaker matron's inward light,

The Doctor's mail of Calvin's creed ?

All hearts confess the saints elect

670

Who, twain in faith, in love agree,

And melt not in an acid sect

The Christian pearl of charity !

So days went on: a week had passed

Since the great world was heard from last.

The Almanac we studied o'er,

Read and re-read our little store

Of books and pamphlets, scarce a score;

One harmless novel, mostly hid

From younger eyes, a book forbid,

680

And poetry, (or good or bad,

A single book was all we had,)

Where Ellwood's meek, drab-skirted Muse,

A stranger to the heathen Nine,

Sang, with a somewhat nasal whine,

The wars of David and the Jews.

At last the floundering carrier bore

The village paper to our door.

Lo ! broadening outward as we read,

To warmer zones the horizon spread;

690

In panoramic length unrolled

We saw the marvels that it told.

Before us passed the painted Creeks,

And daft McGregor on his raids

In Costa Rica's everglades.

And up Taygetos winding slow

Rode Ypsilanti's Mainote Greeks,

A Turk's head at each saddle-bow !

Welcome to us its week-old news,

Its corner for the rustic Muse,

700

Its monthly gauge of snow and rain,

Its record, mingling in a breath

The wedding bell and dirge of death:

Jest, anecdote, and love-lorn tale,

The latest culprit sent to gaol;

Its hue and cry of stolen and lost,

Its vendue sales and goods at cost,

And traffic calling loud for gain.

We felt the stir of hall and street,
The pulse of life that round us beat; 710
The chill embargo of the snow
Was melted in the genial glow;
Wide swung again our ice-locked door,
And all the world was ours once more !

Clasp, Angel of the backward look
And folded wings of ashen grey
And voice of echoes far away,
The brazen covers of thy book;
The weird palimpsest old and vast,
Wherein thou hid'st the spectral past; 720
Where, closely mingling, pale and glow
The characters of joy and woe;
The monographs of outlived years,
Or smile-illumed or dim with tears,

Green hills of life that slope to death,
And haunts of home, whose vistaed trees
Shade off to mournful cypresses

With the white amaranths underneath.
Even while I look, I can but heed

The restless sands' incessant fall, 730
Importunate hours that hours succeed,
Each clamorous with its own sharp need,
And duty keeping pace with all.

Shut down and clasp the heavy lids;
I hear again the voice that bids
The dreamer leave his dream midway
For larger hopes and graver fears:
Life greatens in these later years.
The century's aloe flowers to-day !

Yet, haply, in some lull of life, 740
Some Truce of God which breaks its strife,
The worldling's eyes shall gather dew,

Dreaming in throngful city ways
Of winter joys his boyhood knew;
And dear and early friends—the few
Who yet remain—shall pause to view
These Flemish pictures of old days:

Sit with me by the homestead hearth,
 And stretch the hands of memory forth 749
 To warm them at the wood-fire's blaze !

And thanks untraced to lips unknown
 Shall greet me like the odours blown
 From unseen meadows newly mown,
 Or lilies floating in some pond,
 Wood-fringed, the wayside gaze beyond;
 The traveller owns the grateful sense
 Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,
 And, pausing, takes with forehead bare
 The benediction of the air. 759

1866.

MY TRIUMPH

THE autumn-time has come;
 On woods that dream of bloom,
 And over purpling vines,
 The low sun fainter shines.

The aster-flower is failing.
 The hazel's gold is paling;
 Yet overhead more near
 The eternal stars appear !

And present gratitude
 Insures the future's good. 10
 And for the things I see
 I trust the things to be;

That in the paths untrod.
 And the long days of God,
 My feet shall still be led,
 My heart be comforted.

O living friends who love me !
 O dear ones gone above me !
 Careless of other fame,
 I leave to you my name. 20

Hide it from idle praises,
Save it from evil phrases:
Why, when dear lips that spake it
Are dumb, should strangers wake it ?

Let the thick curtain fall;
I better know than all
How little I have gained,
How vast the unattained.

Not by the page word-painted
Let life be banned or sainted: 30
Deeper than written scroll
The colours of the soul.

Sweeter than any sung
My songs that found no tongue;
Nobler than any fact
My wish that failed of act.

Others shall sing the song,
Others shall right the wrong,—
Finish what I begin,
And all I fail of win. 40

What matter, I or they ?
Mine or another's day,
So the right word be said
And life the sweeter made ?

Hail to the coming singers !
Hail to the brave light-bringers !
Forward I reach and share
All that they sing and dare.

The airs of heaven blow o'er me;
A glory shines before me 50
Of what mankind shall be,—
Pure, generous, brave, and free.

A dream of man and woman
 Diviner but still human,
 Solving the riddle old,
 Shaping the Age of Gold !

The love of God and neighbour;
 An equal-handed labour;
 The richer life, where beauty
 Walks hand in hand with duty.

60

Ring, bells in unrequited steeples,
 The joy of unborn peoples !
 Sound, trumpets far off blown,
 Your triumph is my own !

Parcel and part of all,
 I keep the festival,
 Fore-reach the good to be,
 And share the victory.

I feel the earth move sunward,
 I join the great march onward,
 And take, by faith, while living,
 My freehold of thanksgiving.

70

1870.

IN SCHOOL-DAYS

STILL sits the school-house by the road,
 A ragged beggar sleeping;
 Around it still the sumachs grow,
 And blackberry-vines are creeping.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
 Deep scarred by raps official;
 The warping floor, the battered seats,
 The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;
 Its door's worn sill, betraying
 The feet that, creeping slow to school,
 Went storming out to playing !

10

Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window-panes,
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving. 20

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favour singled:
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left, he lingered;—
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing, 30
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because,"—the brown eyes lower fell,—
"Because, you see, I love you!"

Still memory to a grey-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing! 40

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her,—because they love him.

MY BIRTHDAY

BENEATH the moonlight and the snow
 Lies dead my latest year;
 The winter winds are wailing low,
 Its dirges in my ear.

I grieve not with the moaning wind
 As if a loss befell;
 Before me, even as behind,
 God is, and all is well!

His light shines on me from above,
 His low voice speaks within,— 10
 The patience of immortal love
 Outwearying mortal sin.

Not mindless of the growing years
 Of care and loss and pain,
 My eyes are wet with thankful tears
 For blessings which remain.

If dim the gold of life has grown,
 I will not count it dross,
 Nor turn from treasures still my own
 To sigh for lack and loss. 20

The years no charm from Nature take;
 As sweet her voices call,
 As beautiful her mornings break,
 As fair her evenings fall.

Love watches o'er my quiet ways,
 Kind voices speak my name,
 And lips that find it hard to praise
 Are slow, at least, to blame.

How softly ebb the tides of will!
 How fields, once lost or won, 30
 Now lie behind me green and still
 Beneath a level sun!

How hushed the hiss of party hate,
The clamour of the throng !
How old, harsh voices of debate
Flow into rhythmic song !

Methinks the spirit's temper grows
Too soft in this still air ;
Somewhat the restful heart forgoes
Of needed watch and prayer.

40

The bark by tempest vainly tossed
May founder in the calm,
And he who braved the polar frost
Faint by the isles of balm.

Better than self-indulgent years
The outflung heart of youth,
Than pleasant songs in idle ears
The tumult of the truth.

Rest for the weary hands is good,
And love for hearts that pine,
But let the manly habitude
Of upright souls be mine.

50

Let winds that blow from heaven refresh,
Dear Lord, the languid air ;
And let the weakness of the flesh
Thy strength of spirit share.

And, if the eye must fail of light,
The ear forget to hear,
Make clearer still the spirit's sight,
More fine the inward ear !

60

Be near me in mine hours of need
To soothe, or cheer, or warn,
And down these slopes of sunset lead
As up the hills of morn !

AT EVENTIDE

POOR and inadequate the shadow-play
 Of gain and loss, of waking and of dream,
 Against life's solemn background needs must seem
 At this late hour. Yet, not unthankfully,
 I call to mind the fountains by the way,
 The breath of flowers, the bird-song on the spray,
 Dear friends, sweet human loves, the joy of giving
 And of receiving, the great boon of living
 In grand historic years when Liberty
 Had need of word and work, quick sympathies 10
 For all who fail and suffer, song's relief,
 Nature's uncloying loveliness; and chief,
 The kind restraining hand of Providence,
 The inward witness, the assuring sense
 Of an Eternal Good which overlies
 The sorrow of the world, Love which outlives
 All sin and wrong, Compassion which forgives
 To the uttermost, and Justice whose clear eyes
 Through lapse and failure look to the intent,
 And judge our frailty by the life we meant. 20

1878.

MY TRUST

A PICTURE memory brings to me:
 I look across the years and see
 Myself beside my mother's knee.

I feel her gentle hand restrain
 My selfish moods, and know again
 A child's blind sense of wrong and pain.

But wiser now, a man grey grown,
 My childhood's needs are better known.
 My mother's chastening love I own.

Grey grown, but in our Father's sight 10
A child still groping for the light
To read His works and ways aright.

I wait, in His good time to see
That as my mother dealt with me
So with His children dealeth He.

I bow myself beneath His hand:
That pain itself was wisely planned
I feel, and partly understand.

The joy that comes in sorrow's guise,
The sweet pains of self-sacrifice, 20
I would not have them otherwise.

And what were life and death if sin
Knew not the dread rebuke within,
The pang of merciful discipline ?

Not with thy proud despair of old,
Crowned stoic of Rome's noblest mould !
Pleasure and pain alike I hold.

I suffer with no vain pretence
Of triumph over flesh and sense,
Yet trust the grievous providence, 30

How dark soe'er it seems, may tend,
By ways I cannot comprehend,
To some unguessed benignant end ;

That every loss and lapse may gain
The clear-aired heights by steps of pain,
And never cross is borne in vain.

AN AUTOGRAPH

I WRITE my name as one,
On sands by waves o'errun
Or winter's frosted pane,
Traces a record vain.

Oblivion's blankness claims
Wiser and better names,
And well my own may pass
As from the strand or glass.

Wash on, O waves of time !
Melt, noons, the frosty rime !
Welcome the shadow vast,
The silence that shall last !

10

When I and all who know
And love me vanish so,
What harm to them or me
Will the lost memory be ?

If any words of mine,
Through right of life divine,
Remain, what matters it
Whose hand the message writ ?

20

Why should the "crownner's quest"
Sit on my worst or best ?
Why should the showman claim
The poor ghost of my name ?

Yet, as when dies a sound
Its spectre lingers round,
Haply my spent life will
Leave some faint echo still.

A whisper giving breath
Of praise or blame to death,
Soothing or saddening such
As loved the living much.

30

Therefore with yearnings vain
And fond I still would fain
A kindly judgement seek,
A tender thought bespeak.

And, while my words are read,
Let this at least be said:
"Whate'er his life's defeatures,
He loved his fellow-creatures.

40

"If, of the Law's stone table,
To hold he scarce was able
The first great precept fast,
He kept for man the last.

"Through mortal lapse and dullness
What lacks the Eternal Fullness,
If still our weakness can
Love Him in loving man?

"Age brought him no despairing
Of the world's future faring;
In human nature still
He found more good than ill.

50

"To all who dumbly suffered,
His tongue and pen he offered;
His life was not his own,
Nor lived for self alone.

"Hater of din and riot
He lived in days unquiet;
And, lover of all beauty,
Trod the hard ways of duty.

60

"He meant no wrong to any,
He sought the good of many,
Yet knew both sin and folly,—
May God forgive him wholly!"

RELIGIOUS POEMS

THE FAMILIST'S HYMN

FATHER ! to Thy suffering poor
Strength and grace and faith impart,
And with Thy own love restore
Comfort to the broken heart !
Oh, the failing ones confirm
With a holier strength of zeal !
Give Thou not the feeble worm
Helpless to the spoiler's heel !

Father ! for Thy holy sake
We are spoiled and hunted thus ;
Joyful, for Thy truth we take
Bonds and burthens unto us :
Poor, and weak, and robbed of all,
Weary with our daily task,
That Thy truth may never fall
Through our weakness, Lord, we ask.

10

Round our fired and wasted homes
Flits the forest-bird unscared,
And at noon the wild beast comes
Where our frugal meal was shared ;
For the song of praises there
Shrieks the crow the livelong day ;
For the sound of evening prayer
Howls the evil beast of prey.

20

Sweet the songs we loved to sing
Underneath Thy holy sky;
Words and tones that used to bring
Tears of joy in every eye;
Dear the wrestling hours of prayer,
When we gathered knee to knee, 30
Blameless youth and hoary hair,
Bowed, O God, alone to Thee.

As Thine early children, Lord,
Shared their wealth and daily bread,
Even so, with one accord,
We, in love, each other fed.
Not with us the miser's hoard,
Not with us his grasping hand;
Equal round a common board,
Drew our meek and brother band ! 40

Safe our quiet Eden lay
When the war-whoop stirred the land
And the Indian turned away
From our home his bloody hand.
Well that forest-ranger saw,
That the burthen and the curse
Of the white man's cruel law
Rested also upon us.

Torn apart, and driven forth
To our toiling hard and long, 50
Father ! from the dust of earth
Lift we still our grateful song !
Grateful, that in bonds we share
In Thy love which maketh free;
Joyful, that the wrongs we bear,
Draw us nearer, Lord, to Thee !

Grateful ! that where'er we toil,—
By Wachuset's wooded side,
On Nantucket's sea-worn isle,
Or by wild Neponset's tide, — 60

Still, in spirit, we are near,
 And our evening hymns, which rise
 Separate and discordant here,
 Meet and mingle in the skies !

Let the scoffer scorn and mock,
 Let the proud and evil priest
 Rob the needy of his flock,
 For his wine-cup and his feast,—
 Redden not Thy bolts in store
 Through the blackness of Thy skies ? 70
 For the sighing of the poor
 Wilt Thou not, at length, arise ?

Worn and wasted, oh ! how long
 Shall Thy trodden poor complain ?
 In Thy name they bear the wrong,
 In Thy cause the bonds of pain !
 Melt oppression's heart of steel,
 Let the haughty priesthood see,
 And their blinded followers feel,
 That in us they mock at Thee ! 80

In Thy time, O Lord of hosts,
 Stretch abroad that hand to save
 Which of old, on Egypt's coasts,
 Smote apart the Red Sea's wave !
 Lead us from this evil land,
 From the spoiler set us free,
 And once more our gathered band,
 Heart to heart, shall worship Thee !

1838.

EZEKIEL

Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking
 against thee by the ways and in the doors of the houses, and
 speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come,
 I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from
 the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and
 they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words,
 but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew

much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.—EZEKIEL, xxxiii. 30-33.

THEY hear Thee not, O God ! nor see;
Beneath Thy rod they mock at Thee;
The princes of our ancient line
Lie drunken with Assyrian wine;
The priests around Thy altar speak
The false words which their hearers seek;
And hymns which Chaldea's wanton maids
Have sung in Dura's idol-shades
Are with the Levites' chant ascending,
With Zion's holiest anthems blending ! 10

On Israel's bleeding bosom set,
The heathen heel is crushing yet;
The towers upon our holy hill
Echo Chaldean footsteps still.
Our wasted shrines,—who weeps for them ?
Who mourneth for Jerusalem ?
Who turneth from his gains away ?
Whose knee with mine is bowed to pray ?
Who, leaving feast and purpling cup,
Takes Zion's lamentation up ? 20

A sad and thoughtful youth, I went
With Israel's early banishment;
And where the sullen Chebar crept,
The ritual of my fathers kept.
The water for the trench I drew,
The firstling of the flock I slew,
And, standing at the altar's side,
I shared the Levites' lingering pride,
That still, amidst her mocking foes,
The smoke of Zion's offering rose. 30

In sudden whirlwind, cloud and flame,
The Spirit of the Highest came !

Before mine eyes a vision passed,
A glory terrible and vast;
With dreadful eyes of living things,
And sounding sweep of angel wings,
With circling light and sapphire throne,
And flame-like form of One thereon,
And voice of that dread Likeness sent
Down from the crystal firmament !

40

The burden of a prophet's power
Fell on me in that fearful hour;
From off unutterable woes
The curtain of the future rose;
I saw far down the coming time
The fiery chastisement of crime;
With noise of mingling hosts, and jar
Of falling towers and shouts of war,
I saw the nations rise and fall,
Like fire-gleams on my tent's white wall.

50

In dream and trance, I saw the slain
Of Egypt heaped like harvest grain.
I saw the walls of sea-born Tyre
Swept over by the spoiler's fire;
And heard the low, expiring moan
Of Edom on his rocky throne;
And, woe is me ! the wild lament
From Zion's desolation sent;
And felt within my heart each blow
Which laid her holy places low.

60

In bonds and sorrow, day by day,
Before the pictured tile I lay;
And there, as in a mirror, saw
The coming of Assyria's war;
Her swarthy lines of spearmen pass
Like locusts through Bethhoron's grass;
I saw them draw their stormy hem
Of battle round Jerusalem;
And, listening, heard the Hebrew wail
Blend with the victor-trump of Baal !

70

Who trembled at my warning word ?
Who owned the prophet of the Lord ?
How mocked the rude, how scoffed the vile,
How stung the Levites' scornful smile,
As o'er my spirit, dark and slow,
The shadow crept of Israel's woe
As if the angel's mournful roll
Had left its record on my soul,
And traced in lines of darkness there
The picture of its great despair ! 80

Yet ever at the hour I feel
My lips in prophecy unseal.
Prince, priest, and Levite gather near,
And Salem's daughters haste to hear,
On Chebar's waste and alien shore,
The harp of Judah swept once more.
They listen, as in Babel's throng
The Chaldeans to the dancer's song,
Or wild sabbeka's nightly play,
As careless and as vain as they. 90

And thus, O Prophet-bard of old,
•Hast thou thy tale of sorrow told !
The same which earth's unwelcome seers
Have felt in all succeeding years.
Sport of the changeful multitude,
Nor calmly heard nor understood,
Their song has seemed a trick of art,
Their warnings but the actor's part.
With bonds, and scorn, and evil will,
The world requites its prophets still. 100

So was it when the Holy One
The garments of the flesh put on !
Men followed where the Highest led
For common gifts of daily bread,
And gross of ear, of vision dim,
Owned not the Godlike power of Him.

Vain as a dreamer's words to them
 His wail above Jerusalem,
 And meaningless the watch He kept
 Through which His weak disciples slept. 110

Yet shrink not thou, whoe'er thou art,
 For God's great purpose set apart,
 Before whose far-discerning eyes,
 The Future as the Present lies !
 Beyond a narrow-bounded age
 Stretches thy prophet-heritage,
 Through Heaven's vast spaces angel-trod,
 And through the eternal years of God !
 Thy audience, worlds !—all things to be
 The witness of the Truth in thee ! 120

1844.

WHAT THE VOICE SAID

MADDENED by Earth's wrong and evil,
 " Lord ! " I cried in sudden ire,
 " From Thy right hand, clothed with thunder,
 Shake the bolted fire !

" Love is lost, and Faith is dying ;
 With the brute the man is sold ;
 And the dropping blood of labour
 Hardens into gold.

" Here the dying wail of Famine,
 There the battle's groan of pain ; 10
 And, in silence, smooth-faced Mammon
 Reaping men like grain.

" ' Where is God, that we should fear Him ?'
 Thus the earth-born Titans say ;
 ' God ! if Thou art living, hear us !'
 Thus the weak ones pray."

“Thou, the patient Heaven upbraiding,”
Spake a solemn Voice within;
“Weary of our Lord’s forbearance,
Art thou free from sin ?

20

“Fearless brow to Him uplifting,
Canst thou for His thunders call,
Knowing that to guilt’s attraction
Evermore they fall ?

“Know’st thou not all germs of evil
In thy heart await their time ?
Not thyself, but God’s restraining,
Stays their growth of crime.

“Couldst thou boast, O child of weakness !
O’er the sons of wrong and strife,
Were their strong temptations planted
In thy path of life ?

30

“Thou hast seen two streamlets gushing
From one fountain, clear and free,
But by widely varying channels
Searching for the sea.

“Glideth one through greenest valleys,
Kissing them with lips still sweet ;
One, mad roaring down the mountains,
Stagnates at their feet.

40

“Is it choice whereby the Parsee
Kneels before his mother’s fire ?
In his black tent did the Tartar
Choose his wandering sire ?

“He alone, whose hand is bounding
Human power and human will,
Looking through each soul’s surrounding,
Knows its good or ill.

“ For thyself, while wrong and sorrow
Make to thee their strong appeal,
Coward wert thou not to utter
What the heart must feel. 50

“ Earnest words must needs be spoken
When the warm heart bleeds or burns
With its scorn of wrong, or pity
For the wronged, by turns.

“ But, by all thy nature’s weakness,
Hidden faults and follies known,
Be thou, in rebuking evil,
Conscious of thine own. 60

“ Not the less shall stern-eyed Duty
To thy lips her trumpet set,
But with harsher blasts shall mingle
Wailings of regret.”

Cease not, Voice of holy speaking,
Teacher sent of God, be near,
Whispering through the day’s cool silence,
Let my spirit hear !

So, when thoughts of evil-doers
Waken scorn, or hatred move,
Shall a mournful fellow-feeling
Temper all with love. 70

1847.

MY SOUL AND I

STAND still, my soul, in the silent dark
I would question thee,
Alone in the shadow drear and stark
With God and me !

What, my soul, was thy errand here ?
Was it mirth or ease,
Or heaping up dust from year to year ?
“Nay, none of these !”

Speak, soul, aright in His holy sight
Whose eye looks still 10
And steadily on thee through the night:
“To do His will !”

What hast thou done, O soul of mine,
That thou tremblest so ?
Hast thou wrought His task, and kept the line
He bade thee go ?

What, silent all ! art sad of cheer ?
Art fearful now ?
When God seemed far and men were near,
How brave wert thou ! 20

Aha ! thou tremblest !—well I see
Thou’rt craven grown.
Is it so hard with God and me
To stand alone ?

Summon thy sunshine bravery back,
O wretched sprite !
Let me hear thy voice through this deep and black
Abysmal night.

What hast thou wrought for Right and Truth,
For God and Man, 30
From the golden hours of bright-eyed youth
To life’s mid span ?

Ah, soul of mine, thy tones I hear,
But weak and low,
Like far sad murmurs on my ear
They come and go.

"I have wrestled stoutly with the Wrong,
 And borne the Right
 From beneath the footfall of the throng
 To life and light.

40

"Wherever Freedom shivered a chain,
 God speed, quoth I;
 To Error amidst her shouting train
 I gave the lie."

Ah, soul of mine ! ah, soul of mine !
 Thy deeds are well :
 Were they wrought for Truth's sake or for thine ?
 My soul, pray tell.

"Of all the work my hand hath wrought
 Beneath the sky,
 Save a place in kindly human thought,
 No gain have I."

50

Go to, go to ! for thy very self
 Thy deeds were done :
 Thou for fame, the miser for pelf,
 Your end is one !

And where art thou going, soul of mine ?
 Canst see the end ?
 And whither this troubled life of thine
 Evermore doth tend ?

60

What daunts thee now ? what shakes thee so ?
 My sad soul, say.
 "I see a cloud like a curtain low
 Hang o'er my way.

"Whither I go I cannot tell :
 That cloud hangs black,
 High as the heaven and deep as hell
 Across my track.

“ I see its shadow coldly enwrap
The souls before. 70
Sadly they enter it, step by step,
To return no more.

“ They shrink, they shudder, dear God! they kneel
To Thee in prayer.
They shut their eyes on the cloud, but feel
That it still is there.

“ In vain they turn from the dread Before
To the Known and Gone;
For while gazing behind them evermore
Their feet glide on. 80

“ Yet, at times, I see upon sweet pale faces
A light begin
To tremble, as if from holy places
And shrines within.

“ And at times methinks their cold lips move
With hymn and prayer,
As if somewhat of awe, but more of love
And hope were there.

“ I call on the souls who have left the light
To reveal their lot; 90
I bend mine ear to that wall of night,
And they answer not.

“ But I hear around me sighs of pain
And the cry of fear,
And a sound like the slow sad dropping of rain,
Each drop a tear!

“ Ah, the cloud is dark, and day by day
I am moving thither:
I must pass beneath it on my way—
God pity me!—whither?” 100

Ah, soul of mine ! so brave and wise
In the life-storm loud,
Fronting so calmly all human eyes
In the sunlit crowd !

Now standing apart with God and me
Thou art weakness all,
Gazing vainly after the things to be
Through Death's dread wall.

But never for this, never for this
Was thy being lent ;
For the craven's fear is but selfishness,
Like his merriment.

110

Folly and Fear are sisters twain :
One closing her eyes, .
The other peopling the dark inane
With spectral lies.

Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
Whate'er thou fearest ;
Round Him in calmest music rolls
Whate'er thou hearest.

120

What to thee is shadow, to Him is day,
And the end He knoweth,
And not on a blind and aimless way
The spirit goeth.

Man sees no future, — a phantom show
Is alone before him ;
Past Time is dead, and the grasses grow,
And flowers bloom o'er him.

Nothing before, nothing behind ;
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.

130

The Present, the Present is all thou hast
For thy sure possessing;
Like the patriarch's angel hold it fast
Till it gives its blessing.

Why fear the night ? why shrink from Death,
That phantom wan ?
There is nothing in heaven or earth beneath
Save God and man. 140

Peopling the shadows we turn from Him
And from one another;
All is spectral and vague and dim
Save God and our brother !

Like warp and woof all destinies
Are woven fast,
Linked in sympathy like the keys
Of an organ vast.

Pluck one thread, and the web ye mar;
Break but one
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar
Through all will run. 150

O restless spirit ! wherefore strain
Beyond thy sphere ?
Heaven and hell, with their joy and pain,
Are now and here.

Back to thyself is measured well
All thou hast given;
Thy neighbour's wrong is thy present hell,
His bliss, thy heaven. 160

And in life, in death, in dark and light,
All are in God's care :
Sound the black abyss, pierce the deep of night,
And He is there !

All which is real now remaineth,
 And fadeth never:
 The hand which upholds it now sustaineth
 The soul forever.

Leaning on Him, make with reverent meekness
 His own thy will, 170
 And with strength from Him shall thy utter weakness
 Life's task fulfil;

And that cloud itself, which now before thee
 Lies dark in view,
 Shall with beams of light from the inner glory
 Be stricken through.

And like meadow mist through autumn's dawn
 Uprolling thin,
 Its thickest folds when about thee drawn
 Let sunlight in. 180

Then of what is to be, and of what is done,
 Why quieriest thou?
 The past and the time to be are one,
 And both are now!

1847.

WORSHIP

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To
 visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep
 himself unspotted from the world.—JAMES i. 27.

THE Pagan's myths through marble lips are spoken,
 And ghosts of old Beliefs still flit and moan
 Round fane and altar overthrown and broken,
 O'er tree-grown barrow and grey ring of stone.

Blind Faith had martyrs in those old high places,
 The Syrian hill grove and the Druid's wood,
 With mothers offering, to the Fiend's embraces,
 Bone of their bone, and blood of their own blood.

Red altars, kindling through that night of error,
 Smoked with warm blood beneath the cruel eye 10
 Of lawless Power and sanguinary Terror,
 Throned on the circle of a pitiless sky;

Beneath whose baleful shadow, overcasting
 All heaven above, and blighting earth below,
 The scourge grew red, the lip grew pale with fasting,
 And man's oblation was his fear and woe!

Then through great temples swelled the dismal moan-
 ing
 Of dirge-like music and sepulchral prayer;
 Pale wizard priests, o'er occult symbols droning,
 Swung their white censers in the burdened air: 20

As if the pomp of rituals, and the savour
 Of gums and spices could the Unseen One please;
 As if His ear could bend, with childish favour,
 To the poor flattery of the organ keys!

Feet red from war-fields trod the church aisles holy,
 With trembling reverence: and the oppressor there,
 Kneeling before his priest, abased and lowly,
 Crushed human hearts beneath his knee of prayer.

Not such the service the benignant Father
 Requireth at His earthly children's hands: 30
 Not the poor offering of vain rites, but rather
 The simple duty man from man demands.

For Earth He asks it: the full joy of heaven
 Knoweth no change of waning or increase;
 The great heart of the Infinite beats even,
 Untroubled flows the river of His peace.

He asks no taper lights, on high surrounding
 The priestly altar and the saintly grave,
 No dolorous chant nor organ music sounding,
 Nor incense clouding up the twilight nave. 40

For he whom Jesus loved hath truly spoken :
 The holier worship which he deigns to bless
 Restores the lost, and binds the spirit broken,
 And feeds the widow and the fatherless !

Types of our human weakness and our sorrow !
 Who lives unhaunted by his loved ones dead ?
 Who, with vain longing, seeketh not to borrow
 From stranger eyes the home lights which have fled ?

O brother man ! fold to thy heart thy brother ;
 Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there ; 50
 To worship rightly is to love each other,
 Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
 Of Him whose holy work was " doing good ;"
 So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
 Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

Then shall all shackles fall ; the stormy clangour
 Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease ;
 Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
 And in its ashes plant the tree of peace ! 60

1848.

THE WISH OF TO-DAY

I ASK not now for gold to gild
 With mocking shine a weary frame ;
 The yearning of the mind is stilled,
 I ask not now for Fame.

A rose-cloud, dimly seen above,
 Melting in heaven's blue depths away ;
 Oh, sweet, fond dream of human Love !
 For thee I may not pray.

But, bowed in lowliness of mind,
 I make my humble wishes known ; 10
 I only ask a will resigned,
 O Father, to Thine own !

To-day, beneath Thy chastening eye
I crave alone for peace and rest,
Submissive in Thy hand to lie,
And feel that it is best.

A marvel seems the Universe,
A miracle our Life and Death;
A mystery which I cannot pierce,
Around, above, beneath. 20

In vain I task my aching brain,
In vain the sage's thought I scan,
I only feel how weak and vain,
How poor and blind, is man.

And now my spirit sighs for home,
And longs for light whereby to see,
And, like a weary child, would come,
O Father, unto Thee !

Though oft, like letters traced on sand,
My weak resolves have passed away, 30
In mercy lend Thy helping hand
Unto my prayer to-day !

1848.

ALL'S WELL

THE clouds, which rise with thunder, slake
Our thirsty souls with rain ;
The blow most dreaded falls to break
From off our limbs a chain ;
And wrongs of man to man but make
The love of God more plain.
As through the shadowy lens of even
The eye looks farthest into heaven
On gleams of star and depths of blue
The glaring sunshine never knew ! 10

1850.

INVOCATION

THROUGH Thy clear spaces, Lord, of old,
 Formless and void the dead earth rolled;
 Deaf to Thy heaven's sweet music, blind
 To the great lights which o'er it shined;
 No sound, no ray, no warmth, no breath,—
 A dumb despair, a wandering death.

To that dark, weltering horror came
 Thy spirit, like a subtle flame,—
 A breath of life electrical,
 Awakening and transforming all,
 Till beat and thrilled in every part
 The pulses of a living heart.

10

Then knew their bounds the land and sea;
 Then smiled the bloom of mead and tree;
 From flower to moth, from beast to man,
 The quick creative impulse ran;
 And earth, with life from Thee renewed,
 Was in Thy holy eyesight good.

As lost and void, as dark and cold
 And formless as that earth of old;
 A wandering waste of storm and night,
 Midst spheres of song and realms of light;
 A blot upon Thy holy sky,
 Untouched, unwarned of Thee, am I.

20

O Thou who movest on the deep
 Of spirits, wake my own from sleep!
 Its darkness melt, its coldness warm,
 The lost restore, the ill transform,
 That flower and fruit henceforth may be
 Its grateful offering, worthy Thee.

30

QUESTIONS OF LIFE

And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel,
 gave me an answer,
 And said, Thy heart hath gone too far in this world, and thinkest
 thou to comprehend the way of the Most High ?
 Then said I, Yea, my Lord. . . .
 Then said he unto me, Go thy way, weigh me the weight of the
 fire, or measure me the blast of the wind, or call me again the hour
 that is past.—2 ESDRAS, ch. iv.

A BENDING staff I would not break,
 A feeble faith I would not shake,
 Nor even rashly pluck away
 The error which some truth may stay,
 Whose loss might leave the soul without
 A shield against the shafts of doubt.

And yet, at times, when over all
 A darker mystery seems to fall,
 (May God forgive the child of dust,
 Who seeks to know, where Faith should trust !)
 I raise the questions, old and dark, II
 Of Uzdom's tempted patriarch,
 And, speech-confounded, build again
 The baffled tower of Shinar's plain.

I am: how little more I know !
 Whence came I ? Whither do I go ?
 A centred self, which feels and is ;
 A cry between the silences ;
 A shadow-birth of clouds at strife
 With sunshine on the hills of life ; 20
 A shaft from Nature's quiver cast
 Into the Future from the Past ;
 Between the cradle and the shroud,
 A meteor's flight from cloud to cloud.

Thorough the vastness, arching all,
 I see the great stars rise and fall,

The rounding seasons come and go,
 The tided oceans ebb and flow;
 The tokens of a central force,
 Whose circles, in their widening course, 30
 O'erlap and move the universe;
 The workings of the law whence springs
 The rhythmic harmony of things,
 Which shapes in earth the darkling spar,
 And orbs in heaven the morning star.

Of all I see, in earth and sky,—
 Star, flower, beast, bird,—what part have I ?
 This conscious life,—is it the same
 Which thrills the universal frame,
 Whereby the caverned crystal shoots, 40
 And mounts the sap from forest roots,
 Whereby the exiled wood-bird tells
 When Spring makes green her native dells ?
 How feels the stone the pang of birth,
 Which brings its sparkling prism forth ?
 The forest-tree the throb which gives
 The life-blood to its new-born leaves ?
 Do bird and blossom feel, like me,
 Life's many-folded mystery,—
 The wonder which it is to be ? 50
 Or stand I severed and distinct,
 From Nature's chain of life unlinked ?
 Allied to all, yet not the less
 Prisoned in separate consciousness,
 Alone o'erburdened with a sense
 Of life, and cause, and consequence ?

In vain to me the Sphinx propounds
 The riddle of her sights and sounds;
 Back still the vaulted mystery gives
 The echoed question it receives. 60
 What sings the brook ? What oracle
 Is in the pine-tree's organ swell ?
 What may the wind's low burden be ?
 The meaning of the moaning sea ?

The hieroglyphics of the stars ?
 Or clouded sunset's crimson bars ?
 I vainly ask, for mocks my skill
 The trick of Nature's cipher still.

I turn from Nature unto men,
 I ask the stylus and the pen ;
 What sang the bards of old ? What meant 70
 The prophets of the Orient ?
 The rolls of buried Egypt, hid
 In painted tomb and pyramid ?
 What mean Idúmea's arrowy lines.
 Or dusk Elora's monstrous signs ?
 How speaks the primal thought of man
 From the grim carvings of Copan ?
 Where rests the secret ? Where the keys
 Of the old death-bolted mysteries ? 80
 Alas ! the dead retain their trust ;
 Dust hath no answer from the dust.

The great enigma still unguessed,
 Unanswered the eternal quest ;
 I gather up the scattered rays
 Of wisdom in the early days,
 Faint gleams and broken, like the light
 Of meteors in a northern night,
 Betraying to the darkling earth
 The unseen sun which gave them birth ; 90
 I listen to the sibyl's chant,
 The voice of priest and hierophant ;
 I know what Indian Kreeshna saith,
 And what of life and what of death
 The demon taught to Socrates ;
 And what, beneath his garden-trees
 Slow pacing, with a dream-like tread,
 The solemn-thoughted Plato said ;
 Nor lack I tokens, great or small,
 Of God's clear light in each and all, 100
 While holding with more dear regard
 The scroll of Hebrew seer and bard,

The starry pages promise-lit
 With Christ's Evangel over-writ,
 Thy miracle of life and death,
 O Holy One of Nazareth !

On Aztec ruins, grey and lone,
 The circling serpent coils in stone,—
 Type of the endless and unknown;
 Whereof we seek the clue to find, 110
 With groping fingers of the blind !
 For ever sought, and never found,
 We trace that serpent-symbol round
 Our resting-place, our starting bound !
 Oh, thriftlessness of dream and guess !
 Oh, wisdom which is foolishness !
 Why idly seek from outward things
 The answer inward silence brings ?
 Why stretch beyond our proper sphere 120
 And age, for that which lies so near ?
 Why climb the far-off hills with pain,
 A nearer view of heaven to gain ?
 In lowliest depths of bosky dells
 The hermit Contemplation dwells.
 A fountain's pine-hung slope his seat,
 And lotus-twined his silent feet,
 Whence, piercing heaven, with screen'd sight,
 He sees at noon the stars, whose light
 Shall glorify the coming night.

Here let me pause, my quest forgo; 130
 Enough for me to feel and know
 That He in whom the cause and end,
 The past and future, meet and blend,—
 Who, girt with His Immensities,
 Our vast and star-hung system sees,
 Small as the clustered Pleiades,—
 Moves not alone the heavenly quires,
 But waves the spring-time's grassy spires,
 Guards not archangel feet alone,
 But deigns to guide and keep my own; 140

Speaks not alone the words of fate
Which worlds destroy, and worlds create,
But whispers in my spirit's ear,
In tones of love, or warning fear,
A language none beside may hear.

To Him, from wanderings long and wild,
I come, an over-wearied child,
In cool and shade His peace to find,
Like dew-fall settling on my mind.
Assured that all I know is best, 150
And humbly trusting for the rest,
I turn from Fancy's cloud-built scheme,
Dark creed, and mournful eastern dream
Of power, impersonal and cold,
Controlling all, itself controlled,
Maker and slave of iron laws,
Alike the subject and the cause;
From vain philosophies, that try
The sevenfold gates of mystery,
And, baffled ever, babble still, 160
Word-prodigal of fate and will;
From Nature, and her mockery, Art,
And book and speech of men apart,
To the still witness in my heart;
With reverence waiting to behold
His Avatár of love untold,
The Eternal Beauty new and old !

1852.

THE OVER-HEART

For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.—ROMANS xi. 36.

- ABOVE, below, in sky and sod,
In leaf and spar, in star and man,
Well might the wise Athenian scan
The geometric signs of God,
The measured order of His plan.

And India's mystics sang aright
 Of the One Life pervading all,—
 One Being's tidal rise and fall
 In soul and form, in sound and sight,—
 Eternal outflow and recall.

10

God is: and man in guilt and fear
 The central fact of Nature owns;
 Kneels, trembling, by his altar-stones,
 And darkly dreams the ghastly smear
 Of blood appeases and atones.

Guilt shapes the Terror: deep within
 The human heart the secret lies
 Of all the hideous deities;
 And, painted on a ground of sin,
 The fabled gods of torment rise !

20

And what is He ? The ripe grain nods,
 The sweet dew falls, the sweet flowers blow;
 But darker signs His presence show:
 The earthquake and the storm are God's,
 And good and evil interflow.

O hearts of love ! O souls that turn
 Like sunflowers to the pure and best !
 To you the truth is manifest:
 For they the mind of Christ discern
 Who lean like John upon His breast !

30

In him of whom the sibyl told,
 For whom the prophet's harp was toned,
 Whose need the sage and magician owned,
 The loving heart of God behold,
 The hope for which the ages groaned !

Fade, pomp of dreadful imagery
 Wherewith mankind have deified
 Their hate, and selfishness, and pride !
 Let the scared dreamer wake to see
 The Christ of Nazareth at his side !

40

What doth that holy Guide require ?
No rite of pain, nor gift of blood,
But man a kindly brotherhood,
Looking, where duty is desire,
To Him, the beautiful and good.

Gone be the faithlessness of fear,
And let the pitying heaven's sweet rain
Wash out the altar's bloody stain ;
The law of Hatred disappear,
The law of Love alone remain. 50

How fall the idols false and grim !
And lo ! their hideous wreck above
The emblems of the Lamb and Dove !
Man turns from God, not God from him ;
And guilt, in suffering, whispers Love !

The world sits at the feet of Christ,
Unknowing, blind, and unconsoled ;
It yet shall touch His garment's fold,
And feel the heavenly Alchemist
Transform its very dust to gold. 60

The theme befitting angel tongues
Beyond a mortal's scope has grown.
O heart of mine ! with reverence own
The fullness which to it belongs,
And trust the unknown for the known.

1859.

THE SHADOW AND THE LIGHT

“ And I sought, whence is Evil: I set before the eye of my spirit the whole creation; whatsoever we see therein,—sea, earth, air, stars, trees, moral creatures,—yea, whatsoever there is we do not see,—angels and spiritual powers. Where is evil, and whence comes it, since God the Good hath created all things ? Why made He anything at all of evil, and not rather by His Almightiness cause it not to be ? These thoughts I turned in my miserable heart, overcharged with most gnawing cares.”
“ And, admonished to return to myself, I entered even into my inmost soul, Thou being my guide, and beheld even beyond my

soul and mind the Light unchangeable. He who knows the Truth knows what that Light is, and he that knows it knows Eternity! O Truth, who art Eternity! Love, who art Truth! Eternity, who art Love! And I beheld that Thou madest all things good, and to Thee is nothing whatsoever evil. From the angel to the worm, from the first motion to the last, Thou settest each in its place, and everything is good in its kind. Woe is me!—how high art Thou in the highest, how deep in the deepest! and Thou never departest from us, and we scarcely return to Thee.”—AUGUSTINE'S *Soliloquies*, Book VII.

THE fourteen centuries fall away
Between us and the Afric saint,
And at his side we urge, to-day,
The immemorial quest and old complaint.

No outward sign to us is given,—
From sea or earth comes no reply;
Hushed as the warm Numidian heaven
He vainly questioned bends our frozen sky.

No victory comes of all our strife,—
From all we grasp the meaning slips;
The Sphinx sits at the gate of life,
With the old question on her awful lips. 10

In paths unknown we hear the feet
Of fear before, and guilt behind;
We pluck the wayside fruit, and eat
Ashes and dust beneath its golden rind.

From age to age descends unchecked
The sad bequest of sire to son,
The body's taint, the mind's defect;
Through every web of life the dark threads run. 19

Oh, why and whither? God knows all;
I only know that He is good,
And that whatever may befall
Or here or there, must be the best that could.

Between the dreadful cherubim
A Father's face I still discern,
As Moses looked of old on Him,
And saw His glory into goodness turn!

For He is merciful as just;

And so, by faith correcting sight, 30
I bow before His will, and trust
Howe'er they seem He doeth all things right.

And dare to hope that He will make
The rugged smooth, the doubtful plain;
His mercy never quite forsake;
His healing visit every realm of pain;

That suffering is not His revenge
Upon His creatures weak and frail,
Sent on a pathway new and strange
With feet that wander and with eyes that fail;

That, o'er the crucible of pain, 41
Watches the tender eye of Love
The slow transmuting of the chain
Whose links are iron below to gold above !

Ah me ! we doubt the shining skies,
Seen through our shadows of offence,
And drown with our poor childish cries
The cradle-hymn of kindly Providence.

And still we love the evil cause,
And of the just effect complain : 50
We tread upon life's broken laws,
And murmur at our self-inflicted pain ;

We turn us from the light, and find
Our spectral shapes before us thrown,
As they who leave the sun behind
Walk in the shadows of themselves alone.

And scarce by will or strength of ours
We set our faces to the day;
Weak, wavering, blind, the Eternal Powers
Alone can turn us from ourselves away. 60

Our weakness is the strength of sin,
 But love must needs be stronger far,
 Outreaching all and gathering in
 The erring spirit and the wandering star.

A Voice grows with the growing years;
 Earth, hushing down her bitter cry,
 Looks upward from her graves, and hears,
 "The Resurrection and the Life am I."

O Love Divine !—whose constant beam
 Shines on the eyes that will not see,
 And waits to bless us, while we dream
 Thou leavest us because we turn from Thee !

70

All souls that struggle and aspire,
 All hearts of prayer by Thee are lit;
 And, dim or clear, Thy tongues of fire
 On dusky tribes and twilight centuries sit.

Nor bounds, nor clime, nor creed Thou know'st,
 Wide as our need Thy favours fall;
 The white wings of the Holy Ghost
 Stoop, seen or unseen, o'er the heads of all.

80

O Beauty, old yet ever new !
 Eternal Voice, and Inward Word,
 The Logos of the Greek and Jew,
 The old sphere-music which the Samian heard !

Truth which the sage and prophet saw,
 Long sought without, but found within,
 The Law of Love beyond all law,
 The Life o'erflooding mortal death and sin !

Shine on us with the light which glowed
 Upon the trance-bound shepherd's way,
 Who saw the Darkness overflowed
 And drowned by tides of everlasting Day.

90

Shine, light of God !—make broad thy scope
To all who sin and suffer ; more
And better than we dare to hope
With Heaven's compassion make our longings poor !
1860.

ANDREW RYKMAN'S PRAYER

ANDREW RYKMAN'S dead and gone ;
You can see his leaning slate
In the graveyard, and thereon
Read his name and date.

" Trust is truer than our fears."
Runs the legend through the moss,
*" Gain is not in added years,
Nor in death is loss."*

Still the feet that thither trod,
All the friendly eyes are dim ;
Only Nature, now, and God
Have a care for him. 10

There the dews of quiet fall,
Singing birds and soft winds stray :
Shall the tender Heart of all
Be less kind than they ?

What he was and what he is
They who ask may haply find,
If they read this prayer of his
Which he left behind. 20

Pardon, Lord, the lips that dare
Shape in words a mortal's prayer !
Prayer, that, when my day is done,
And I see its setting sun,

Shorn and beamless, cold and dim,
Sink beneath the horizon's rim.—
When this ball of rock and clay
Crumbles from my feet away,
And the solid shores of sense
Melt into the vague immense,
Father ! I may come to Thee
Even with the beggar's plea,
As the poorest of Thy poor,
With my needs, and nothing more.

30

Not as one who seeks his home
With a step assured I come;
Still behind the tread I hear
Of my life-companion. Fear;
Still a shadow deep and vast
From my westering feet is cast,
Wavering, doubtful, undefined,
Never shapen nor outlined:
From myself the fear has grown,
And the shadow is my own.
Yet, O Lord, through all a sense
Of Thy tender providence
Stays my failing heart on Thee,
And confirms the feeble knee;
And, at times, my worn feet press
Spaces of cool quietness,
Lilied whiteness shone upon
Not by light of moon or sun.
Hours there be of inmost calm,
Broken but by grateful psalm.
When I love Thee more than fear Thee,
And Thy blessed Christ seems near me,
With forgiving look, as when
He beheld the Magdalen.
Well I know that all things move
To the spherul rhythm of love,—
That to Thee, O Lord of all !
Nothing can of chance befall:

40

50

60

Child and seraph, mote and star,
Well Thou knowest what we are !
Through Thy vast creative plan
Looking, from the worm to man,
There is pity in Thine eyes,
But no hatred nor surprise.
Not in blind caprice of will,
Not in cunning sleight of skill, 70
Not for show of power, was wrought
Nature's marvel in Thy thought.
Never careless hand and vain
Smites these chords of joy and pain ;
No immortal selfishness
Plays the game of curse and bless :
Heaven and earth are witnesses
That Thy glory goodness is. ,
Not for sport of mind and force 80
Hast Thou made Thy universe,
But as atmosphere and zone
Of Thy loving heart alone.
Man, who walketh in a show,
Sees before him, to and fro,
Shadow and illusion go ;
All things flow and fluctuate,
Now contract and now dilate.
In the welter of this sea,
Nothing stable is but Thee ;
In this whirl of swooning trance, 90
Thou alone art permanence ;
All without Thee only seems,
All beside is choice of dreams.
Never yet in darkest mood
Doubted I that Thou wast good,
Nor mistook my will for fate,
Pain of sin for heavenly hate,—
Never dreamed the gates of pearl
Rise from out the burning marl,
Or that good can only live 100
Of the bad conservative,

And through counterpoise of hell
Heaven alone be possible.

For myself alone I doubt;
All is well, I know, without;
I alone the beauty mar,
I alone the music jar.
Yet, with hands by evil stained,
And an ear by discord pained,
I am groping for the keys 110
Of the heavenly harmonies;
Still within my heart I bear
Love for all things good and fair.
Hands of want or souls in pain
Have not sought my door in vain;
I have kept my fealty good
To the human brotherhood;
Scarcely have I asked in prayer
That which others might not share.
I, who hear with secret shame 120
Praise that paineth more than blame,
Rich alone in favours lent,
Virtuous by accident,
Doubtful where I fain would rest,
Frailest where I seem the best,
Only strong for lack of test,—
What am I, that I should press
Special pleas of selfishness,
Coolly mounting into heaven
On my neighbour unforgiven? 130
Ne'er to me, how'er disguised,
Comes a saint unrecognized:
Never fails my heart to greet
Noble deed with warmer beat;
Halt and maimed, I own not less
All the grace of holiness;
Nor, through shame or self-distrust,
Less I love the pure and just.
Lord, forgive these words of mine:
What have I that is not Thine? 140

Whatsoever I fain would boast
Needs Thy pitying pardon most.
Thou, O Elder Brother ! who
In Thy flesh our trial knew,
Thou, who hast been touched by these
Our most sad infirmities,
Thou alone the gulf canst span
In the dual heart of man,
And between the soul and sense
Reconcile all difference, 150
Change the dream of me and mine
For the truth of Thee and Thine,
And, through chaos, doubt, and strife,
Interfuse Thy calm of life.
Haply, thus by Thee renewed,
In Thy borrowed goodness good,
Some sweet morning yet in God's
Dim, æonian periods,
Joyful I shall wake to see
Those I love who rest in Thee, 160
And to them in Thee allied
Shall my soul be satisfied.

Scarcely Hope hath shaped for me
What the future life may be.
Other lips may well be bold ;
Like the publican of old,
I can only urge the plea,
" Lord, be merciful to me !"
Nothing of desert I claim,
Unto me belongeth shame. 170
Not for me the crowns of gold,
Palms, and harpings manifold ;
Not for erring eye and feet
Jasper wall and golden street.
What Thou wilt, O Father, give !
All is gain that I receive.
If my voice I may not raise
In the elders' song of praise,

If I may not, sin-defiled,
 Claim my birthright as a child, 180
 Suffer it that I to Thee
 As an hired servant be;
 Let the lowliest task be mine,
 Grateful, so the work be Thine;
 Let me find the humblest place
 In the shadow of Thy grace:
 Blest to me were any spot
 Where temptation whispers not.
 If there be some weaker one,
 Give me strength to help him on; 190
 If a blinder soul there be,
 Let me guide him nearer Thee.
 Make my mortal dreams come true
 With the work I fain would do;
 Clothe with life the weak intent,
 Let me be the thing I meant;
 Let me find in Thy employ
 Peace that dearer is than joy;
 Out of self to love be led
 And to heaven acclimated. 200
 Until all things sweet and good
 Seem my natural habitude.

So we read the prayer of him
 Who, with John of Labadie,
 Trod, of old, the oozy rim
 Of the Zuyder Zee.

Thus did Andrew Rykman pray.
 Are we wiser, better grown,
 That we may not, in our day,
 Make his prayer our own? 210

THE ANSWER

SPARE me, dread angel of reproof,
 And let the sunshine weave to-day
 Its gold-threads in the warp and woof
 Of life so poor and grey.

Spare me awhile; the flesh is weak.
 These lingering feet, that fain would stray
 Among the flowers, shall some day seek
 The strait and narrow way.

Take off thy ever-watchful eye,
 The awe of thy rebuking frown; . 10
 The dullest slave at times must sigh
 To fling his burdens down;

To drop his galley's straining oar,
 And press, in summer warmth and calm,
 The lap of some enchanted shore
 Of blossom and of balm.

Grudge not my life its hour of bloom,
 My heart its taste of long desire;
 This day be mine: be those to come
 As duty shall require. 20

The deep voice answered to my own,
 Smiting my selfish prayers away;
 "To-morrow is with God alone,
 And man hath but to-day.

"Say not, thy fond, vain heart within,
 The Father's arm shall still be wide.
 When from these pleasant ways of sin
 Thou turn'st at eventide.

" 'Cast thyself down,' the tempter saith,
 'And angels shall thy feet upbear.' 30
 He bids thee make a lie of faith,
 And blasphemy of prayer.

“Though God be good and free be heaven,
No force divine can love compel;
And, though the song of sins forgiven
May sound through lowest hell,

“The sweet persuasion of His voice
Respects thy sanctity of will.
He giveth day: thou hast thy choice
To walk in darkness still;

40

“As one who, turning from the light,
Watches his own grey shadow fall,
Doubting, upon his path of night,
If there be day at all!

“No word of doom may shut thee out,
No wind of wrath may downward whirl,
No swords of fire keep watch about
The open gates of pearl;

“A tenderer light than moon or sun,
Than song of earth a sweeter hymn,
May shine and sound for ever on,
And thou be deaf and dim.

50

“For ever round the Mercy-seat
The guiding lights of Love shall burn;
But what if, habit-bound, thy feet
Shall lack the will to turn?

“What if thine eye refuse to see,
Thine ear of Heaven's free welcome fail.
And thou a willing captive be,
Thyself thy own dark jail?

60

“Oh, doom beyond the saddest guess,
As the long years of God unroll,
To make thy dreary selfishness
The prison of a soul!

“To doubt the love that fain would break
 The fetters from thy self-bound limb;
 And dream that God can thee forsake
 As thou forsakest Him !”

1863.

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

O FRIENDS ! with whom my feet have trod
 The quiet aisles of prayer,
 Glad witness to your zeal for God
 And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;
 Your logic linked and strong
 I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
 And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
 To hold your iron creeds:
 Against the words ye bid me speak
 My heart within me pleads.

10

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought ?
 Who talks of scheme and plan ?
 The Lord is God ! He needeth not
 The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
 Ye tread with boldness shod;
 I dare not fix with mete and bound
 The love and power of God.

20

Ye praise His justice; even such
 His pitying love I deem:
 Ye seek a king; I fain would touch
 The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know:
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

30

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

40

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate,—I know
His goodness and His love.

50

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgements too are right.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong. 60

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove; 70
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care. 80

O brothers ! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord ! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee !

OUR MASTER

IMMORTAL Love, for ever full,
 For ever flowing free,
 For ever shared, for ever whole,
 A never-ebbing sea !

Our outward lips confess the name
 All other names above ;
 Love only knoweth whence it came,
 And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds of God, awake and blow
 The mists of earth away !
 Shine out, O Light Divine, and show
 How wide and far we stray !

10

Hush every lip, close every book,
 The strife of tongues forbear ;
 Why forward reach, or backward look,
 For love that clasps like air ?

We may not climb the heavenly steep
 To bring the Lord Christ down ;
 In vain we search the lowest deep,
 For Him no depths can drown.

20

Nor holy bread, nor blood of grape,
 The lineaments restore
 Of Him we know in outward shape
 And in the flesh no more.

He cometh not a king to reign ;
 The world's long hope is dim ;
 The weary centuries watch in vain
 The clouds of heaven for Him.

Death comes, life goes ; the asking eye
 And ear are answerless ;
 The grave is dumb, the hollow sky
 Is sad with silentness.

30

The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes ;
The Spirit over-brooding all,
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John His smile of love,
With Peter His rebuke.

40

In joy of inward peace, or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is His own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

50

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain ;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame,
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His name.

60

Our Lord and Master of us all !
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.

Thou judgest us; Thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn;
The love that draws us nearer Thee
Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to Thy sight;
And, naked to Thy glance,
Our secret sins are in the light
Of Thy pure countenance.

70

Thy healing pains, a keen distress
Thy tender light shines in;
Thy sweetness is the bitterness,
Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
Thou dost our service own;
We bring our varying gifts to Thee,
And Thou rejectest none.

80

To Thee our full humanity,
Its joys and pains, belong;
The wrong of man to man on Thee
Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates Thee, who loves becomes
Therein to Thee allied;
All sweet accords of hearts and homes
In Thee are multiplied.

Deep strike Thy roots, O heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod,
Most human and yet most divine,
The flower of man and God!

90

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noon-day sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in Thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed. 100

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in Thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render Thee
Is still our Father's own;
No jealous claim or rivalry
Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do Thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds, 110
And simple trust can find Thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.

No pride of self Thy service hath,
No place for me and mine;
Our human strength is weakness, death
Our life, apart from Thine.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,
All labour vainly done;
The solemn shadow of Thy Cross
Is better than the sun. 120

Alone, O Love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from Thee is hell,
To walk with Thee is heaven!

How vain, secure in all Thou art,
Our noisy championship!
The sighing of the contrite heart
Is more than flattering lip.

Not Thine the bigot's partial plea,
 Nor Thine the zealot's ban;
 Thou well canst spare a love of Thee
 Which ends in hate of man. 130

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
 What may Thy service be?—
 Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
 But simply following Thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,
 We pile no graven stone;
 He serves Thee best who loveth most
 His brothers and Thy own. 135

Thy litanies, sweet offices
 Of love and gratitude;
 Thy sacramental liturgies,
 The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift
 The vaulted nave around,
 In vain the minster turret lift
 Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring Thy Christmas bells,
 Thy inward altars raise:
 Its faith and hope Thy canticles,
 And its obedience praise! 150

1866.

THE MEETING

THE elder folks shook hands at last,
 Down seat by seat the signal passed.
 To simple ways like ours unused,
 Half solemnized and half amused,
 With long-drawn breath and shrug, my guest
 His sense of glad relief expressed.

Outside, the hills lay warm in sun;
The cattle in the meadow-run
Stood half-leg deep; a single bird
The green repose above us stirred. 10
“What part or lot have you,” he said,
“In these dull rites of drowsy-head?
Is silence worship? Seek it where
It soothes with dreams the summer air,
Not in this close and rude-benched hall,
But where soft lights and shadows fall,
And all the slow, sleep-walking hours
Glide soundless over grass and flowers!
From time and place and form apart,
Its holy ground the human heart, 20
Nor ritual-bound nor templeward
Walks the free spirit of the Lord!
Our common Master did not pen
His followers up from other men;
His service liberty indeed,
He built no church, He framed no creed;
But while the saintly Pharisee
Made broader his phylactery,
As from the synagogue was seen
The dusty-sandalled Nazarene 30
Through ripening cornfields lead the way
Upon the awful Sabbath day,
His sermons were the healthful talk
That shorter made the mountain-walk,
His wayside texts were flowers and birds,
Where mingled with His gracious words
The rustle of the tamarisk-tree
And ripple-wash of Galilee.”

“Thy words are well, O friend,” I said;
“Unmeasured and unlimited, 40
With noiseless slide of stone to stone,
The mystic Church of God has grown.
Invisible and silent stands
The temple never made with hands,

Unheard the voices still and small
 Of its unseen confessional.
 He needs no special place of prayer
 Whose hearing ear is everywhere;
 He brings not back the childish days
 That ringed the earth with stones of praise, 50
 Roofed Karnak's hall of gods, and laid
 The plinths of Philæ's colonnade.
 Still less He owns the selfish good
 And sickly growth of solitude,—
 The worthless grace that, out of sight,
 Flowers in the desert anchorite;
 Dissevered from the suffering whole,
 Love hath no power to save a soul.
 Not out of Self, the origin
 And native air and soil of sin, 60
 The living waters spring and flow,
 The trees with leaves of healing grow.

“Dream not, O friend, because I seek
 This quiet shelter twice a week,
 I better deem its pine-laid floor
 Than breezy hill or sea-sung shore;
 But nature is not solitude:
 She crowds us with her thronging wood;
 Her many hands reach out to us,
 Her many tongues are garrulous; 70
 Perpetual riddles of surprise
 She offers to our ears and eyes;
 She will not leave our senses still,
 But drags them captive at her will:
 And, making earth too great for heaven,
 She hides the Giver in the given.

“And so I find it well to come
 For deeper rest to this still room,
 For here the habit of the soul
 Feels less the outer world's control; 80
 The strength of mutual purpose pleads
 More earnestly our common needs;

And from the silence multiplied
 By these still forms on either side,
 The world that time and sense have known
 Falls off and leaves us God alone.

“ Yet rarely through the charmed repose
 Unmixed the stream of motive flows,
 A flavour of its many springs,
 The tints of earth and sky it brings; 90
 In the still waters needs must be
 Some shade of human sympathy;
 And here, in its accustomed place,
 I look on memory’s dearest face;
 The blind by-sitter guesseth not
 What shadow haunts that vacant spot;
 No eyes save mine alone can see
 The love wherewith it welcomes me !
 And still, with those alone my kin,
 In doubt and weakness, want and sin, 100
 I bow my head, my heart I bare,
 As when that face was living there,
 And strive (too oft, alas ! in vain)
 The peace of simple trust to gain,
 Fold fancy’s restless wings, and lay
 The idols of my heart away.

“ Welcome the silence all unbroken,
 Nor less the words of fitness spoken,—
 Such golden words as hers for whom 109
 Our autumn flowers have just made room;
 Whose hopeful utterance through and through
 The freshness of the morning blew;
 Who loved not less the earth that light
 Fell on it from the heavens in sight,
 But saw in all fair forms more fair
 The Eternal beauty mirrored there.
 Whose eighty years but added grace
 And saintlier meaning to her face,—
 The look of one who bore away
 Glad tidings from the hills of day, 120

While all our hearts went forth to meet
 The coming of her beautiful feet !
 Or haply hers, whose pilgrim tread
 Is in the paths where Jesus led ;
 Who dreams her childhood's sabbath dream
 By Jordan's willow-shaded stream,
 And, of the hymns of hope and faith,
 Sung by the monks of Nazareth,
 Hears pious echoes, in the call
 To prayer, from Moslem minarets fall, 130
 Repeating where His works were wrought
 The lesson that her Master taught,
 Of whom an elder Sibyl gave,
 The prophecies of Cumæ's cave !

" I ask no organ's soulless breath
 To drone the themes of life and death,
 No altar candle-lit by day,
 No ornate wordsman's rhetoric-play,
 No cool philosophy to teach
 Its bland audacities of speech 140
 To double-tasked idolaters
 Themselves their gods and worshippers,
 No pulpit hammered by the fist
 Of loud-asserting dogmatist,
 Who borrows for the Hand of love
 The smoking thunderbolts of Jove.
 I know how well the fathers taught,
 What work the later schoolmen wrought ;
 I reverence old-time faith and men,
 But God is near us now as then ; 150
 His force of love is still unspent,
 His hate of sin as imminent ;
 And still the measure of our needs
 Outgrows the cramping bounds of creeds ;
 The manna gathered yesterday
 Already savours of decay ;
 Doubts to the world's child-heart unknown
 Question us now from star and stone ;

Too little or too much we know,
And sight is swift and faith is slow; 160
The power is lost to self-deceive
With shallow forms of make-believe.
We walk at high noon, and the bells
Call to a thousand oracles,
But the sound deafens, and the light
Is stronger than our dazzled sight;
The letters of the sacred Book
Glimmer and swim beneath our look;
Still struggles in the Age's breast
With deepening agony of quest 170
The old entreaty: 'Art Thou He,
Or look we for the Christ to be?'

"God should be most where man is least:
So, where is neither church nor priest,
And never rag of form or creed
To clothe the nakedness of need,—
Where farmer-folk in silence meet,—
I turn my bell-unsummoned feet;
I lay the critic's glass aside,
I tread upon my lettered pride, 180
And, lowest-seated, testify
To the oneness of humanity;
Confess the universal want,
And share whatever Heaven may grant.
He findeth not who seeks his own,
The soul is lost that's saved alone.
Not on one favoured forehead fell
Of old the fire-tongued miracle,
But flamed o'er all the thronging host
The baptism of the Holy Ghost; 190
Heart answers heart: in one desire
The blending lines of prayer aspire:
'Where, in My name, meet two or three,'
Our Lord hath said, 'I there will be!'

"So sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence

That very near about us lies
 The realm of spiritual mysteries.
 The sphere of the supernal powers
 Impinges on this world of ours. 200
 The low and dark horizon lifts,
 To light the scenic terror shifts;
 The breath of a diviner air
 Blows down the answer of a prayer:
 That all our sorrow, pain, and doubt
 A great compassion clasps about,
 And law and goodness, love and force,
 Are wedded fast beyond divorce.
 Then duty leaves to love its task,
 The beggar Self forgets to ask; 210
 With smile of trust and folded hands,
 The passive soul in waiting stands
 To feel, as flowers the sun and dew,
 The One true Life its own renew.

" So to the calmly gathered thought
 The innermost of truth is taught,
 The mystery dimly understood.
 That love of God is love of good,
 And, chiefly, its divinest trace
 In Him of Nazareth's holy face; 220
 That to be saved is only this, —
 Salvation from our selfishness,
 From more than elemental fire,
 The soul's unsanctified desire,
 From sin itself, and not the pain
 That warns us of its chafing chain;
 That worship's deeper meaning lies
 In mercy, and not sacrifice,
 Not proud humilities of sense
 And posturing of penitence, 230
 But love's unforced obedience;
 That Book and Church and Day are given
 For man, not God,—for earth, not heaven,—
 The blessed means to holiest ends,
 Not masters, but benignant friends;

That the dear Christ dwells not afar,
 The king of some remoter star,
 Listening, at times, with flattered ear
 To homage wrung from selfish fear,
 But here, amidst the poor and blind,
 The bound and suffering of our kind,
 In works we do, in prayers we pray,
 Life of our life, He lives to-day."

240

1868.

THE CLEAR VISION

I DID but dream. I never know
 What charms our sternest season wore.
 Was never yet the sky so blue,
 Was never earth so white before.
 Till now I never saw the glow
 Of sunset on yon hills of snow,
 And never learned the bough's designs
 Of beauty in its leafless lines.

Did ever such a morning break
 As that my eastern windows see ?
 Did ever such a moonlight take
 Weird photographs of shrub and tree ?
 Rang ever bells so wild and fleet
 The music of the winter street ?
 Was ever yet a sound by half
 So merry as yon school-boy's laugh ?

10

O Earth ! with gladness overfraught,
 No added charm thy face hath found ;
 Within my heart the change is wrought,
 My footsteps make enchanted ground.
 From couch of pain and curtained room
 Forth to thy light and air I come,
 To find in all that meets my eyes
 The freshness of a glad surprise.

20

Fair seem these winter days, and soon
 Shall blow the warm west-winds of spring,
 To set the unbound rills in tune
 And hither urge the bluebird's wing.
 The vales shall laugh in flowers, the woods
 Grow misty green with leafing buds,
 And violets and wind-flowers sway
 Against the throbbing heart of May.

30

Break forth, my lips, in praise, and own
 The wiser love severely kind;
 Since, richer for its chastening grown,
 I see, whereas I once was blind.
 The world, O Father! hath not wronged
 With loss the life by Thee prolonged;
 But still, with every added year,
 More beautiful Thy works appear!

40

As Thou hast made Thy world without,
 Make Thou more fair my world within;
 Shine through its lingering clouds of doubt;
 Rebuke its haunting shapes of sin;
 Fill, brief or long, my granted span
 Of life with love to Thee and man;
 Strike when Thou wilt the hour of rest,
 But let my last days be my best!

2d mo., 1868.

DIVINE COMPASSION

LONG since, a dream of heaven I had,
 And still the vision haunts me oft;
 I see the saints in white robes clad,
 The martyrs with their palms aloft;
 But hearing still, in middle song,
 The ceaseless dissonance of wrong:
 And shrinking, with hid faces, from the strain
 Of sad, beseeching eyes, full of remorse and pain.

The glad song falters to a wail,
The harping sinks to low lament; 10
Before the still unlifted veil

I see the crown'd foreheads bent,
Making more sweet the heavenly air
With breathings of unselfish prayer;
And a Voice saith: "O Pity which is pain,
O Love that weeps, fill up My sufferings which
remain !

" Shall souls redeemed by Me refuse
To share My sorrow in their turn ?
Or, sin-forgiven, My gift abuse
Of peace with selfish unconcern ? 20
Has saintly ease no pitying care ?
Has faith no work, and love no prayer ?
While sin remains, and souls in darkness dwell,
Can heaven itself be heaven, and look unmoved on
hell ?"

Then through the Gates of Pain, I dream,
A wind of heaven blows coolly in;
Fainter the awful discords seem,
The smoke of torment grows more thin,
Tears quench the burning soil, and thence
Spring sweet, pale flowers of penitence: 30
And through the dreary realm of man's despair,
Star-crowned an angel walks, and lo ! God's hope is
there !

Is it a dream ? Is heaven so high
That pity cannot breathe its air ?
Its happy eyes for ever dry,
Its holy lips without a prayer !
My God ! my God ! if thither led
By Thy free grace unmerited.
No crown nor palm be mine, but let me keep
A heart that still can feel, and eyes that still can
weep. 40

THE BREWING OF SOMA

"These libations mixed with milk have been prepared for Indra; offer Soma to the drinker of Soma."—*Vashista*, translated by MAX MÜLLER.

THE fagots blazed, the caldron's smoke
Up through the green wood curled;
"Bring honey from the hollow oak,
Bring milky sap," the brewers spoke,
In the childhood of the world.

And brewed they well or brewed they ill,
The priests thrust in their rods,
First tasted, and then drank their fill,
And shouted, with one voice and will,
"Behold the drink of gods!"

10

They drank, and lo! in heart and brain
A new, glad life began;
The grey of hair grew young again,
The sick man laughed away his pain,
The cripple leaped and ran.

"Drink, mortals, what the gods have sent,
Forget your long annoy."
So sang the priests. From tent to tent
The Soma's sacred madness went,
A storm of drunken joy.

20

Then knew each rapt inebriate
A winged and glorious birth,
Soared upward, with strange joy elate,
Beat, with dazed head, Varuna's gate,
And, sobered, sank to earth.

The land with Soma's praises rang;
On Gihon's banks of shade
Its hymns the dusky maidens sang;
In joy of life or mortal pang
All men to Soma prayed.

30

The morning twilight of the race
Sends down these matin psalms;
And still with wondering eyes we trace
The simple prayers to Soma's grace,
That Vedic verse embalms.

As in that child-world's early year,
Each after age has striven
By music, incense, vigils drear,
And trance, to bring the skies more near,
Or lift men up to heaven !

40

Some fever of the blood and brain,
Some self-exalting spell,
The scourger's keen delight of pain,
The Dervish dance, the Orphic strain,
The wild-haired Bacchant's yell,—

The desert's hair-grown hermit sunk
The saner brute below;
The naked Santon, hashish-drunk,
The cloister madness of the monk,
The fakir's torture-show !

50

And yet the past comes round again,
And new doth old fulfil;
In sensual transports wild as vain
We brew in many a Christian fane
The heathen Soma still !

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways !
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

60

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee !
 O calm of hills above,
 Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
 The silence of eternity
 Interpreted by love !

70

With that deep hush subduing all
 Our words and works that drown
 The tender whisper of Thy call,
 As noiseless let Thy blessing fall
 As fell Thy manna down.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
 Till all our strivings cease ;
 Take from our souls the strain and stress.
 And let our ordered lives confess
 The beauty of Thy peace.

80

Breathe through the heats of our desire
 Thy coolness and Thy balm ;
 Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire ;
 Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
 O still, small voice of calm !

1872.

THE PRAYER OF AGASSIZ

On the isle of Penikese,
 Ringed about by sapphire seas,
 Fanned by breezes salt and cool,
 Stood the Master with his school.
 Over sails that not in vain
 Wooed the west-wind's steady strain,
 Line of coast that low and far
 Stretched its undulating bar,
 Wings aslant across the rim
 Of the waves they stooped to skim,
 Rock and isle and glistening bay,
 Fell the beautiful white day.

10

Said the Master to the youth :
" We have come in search of truth,
Trying with uncertain key
Door by door of mystery;
We are reaching, through His laws,
To the garment-hem of Cause,
Him, the endless, unbegun,
The Unnamable, the One 20
Light of all our light the Source,
Life of life, and Force of force.
As with fingers of the blind,
We are groping here to find
What the hieroglyphics mean
Of the Unseen in the seen,
What the Thought which underlies
Nature's masking and disguise,
What it is that hides beneath
Blight and bloom and birth and death. 30
By past efforts unavailing,
Doubt and error, loss and failing,
Of our weakness made aware,
On the threshold of our task
Let us light and guidance ask.
Let us pause in silent prayer !"

Then the Master in his place
Bowed his head a little space.
And the leaves by soft airs stirred,
Lapse of wave and cry of bird, 40
Left the solemn hush unbroken
Of that wordless prayer unspoken,
While its wish, on earth unsaid,
Rose to heaven interpreted.
As, in life's best hours, we hear
By the spirit's finer ear
His low voice within us, thus
The All-Father heareth us;
And His holy ear we pain
With our noisy words and vain. 50

Not for Him our violence
 Storming at the gates of sense,
 His the primal language, His
 The eternal silences !

Even the careless heart was moved,
 And the doubting gave assent,
 With a gesture reverent,
 To the Master well-beloved.
 As thin mists are glorified
 By the light they cannot hide, 60
 All who gazed upon him saw,
 Through its veil of tender awe,
 How his face was still uplit
 By the old sweet look of it.
 Hopeful, trustful, full of cheer,
 And the love that casts out fear.
 Who the secret may declare
 Of that brief, unuttered prayer ?
 Did the shade before him come
 Of th' inevitable doom, 70
 Of the end of earth so near,
 And Eternity's new year ?

In the lap of sheltering seas
 Rests the isle of Penikese ;
 But the lord of the domain
 Comes not to his own again :
 Where the eyes that follow fail,
 On a vaster sea his sail
 Drifts beyond our beck and hail.
 Other lips within its bound 80
 Shall the laws of life expound ;
 Other eyes from rock and shell
 Read the world's old riddles well :
 But when breezes light and bland
 Blow from Summer's blossomed land,
 When the air is glad with wings,
 And the blithe song-sparrow sings,

Many an eye with his still face
 Shall the living ones displace,
 Many an ear the word shall seek 90
 He alone could fitly speak.
 And one name forevermore
 Shall be uttered o'er and o'er
 By the waves that kiss the shore,
 By the curlew's whistle sent
 Down the cool, sea-scented air;
 In all voices known to her,
 Nature owns her worshipper,
 Half in triumph, half lament.
 Thither Love shall tearful turn, 100
 Friendship pause uncovered there,
 And the wisest reverence learn
 From the Master's silent prayer.

1873.

IN QUEST

HAVE I not voyaged, friend beloved, with thee
 On the great waters of the unsounded sea,
 Momently listening with suspended oar
 For the low rote of waves upon a shore
 Changeless as heaven, where never fog-cloud drifts
 Over its windless wood, nor mirage lifts
 The steadfast hills; where never birds of doubt
 Sing to mislead, and every dream dies out,
 And the dark riddles which perplex us here
 In the sharp solvent of its light are clear? 10
 Thou knowest how vain our quest: how, soon or late,
 The baffling tides and circles of debate
 Swept back our bark unto its starting-place,
 Where, looking forth upon the blank, grey space,
 And round about us seeing, with sad eyes,
 The same old difficult hills and cloud-cold skies,
 We said: "This outward search availeth not
 To find Him. He is farther than we thought,
 Or, haply, nearer. To this very spot

Whereon we wait, this commonplace of home, 20
 As to the well of Jacob, He may come
 And tell us all things." As I listened there,
 Through the expectant silences of prayer,
 Somewhat I seemed to hear, which hath to me
 Been hope, strength, comfort, and I give it thee.
 "The riddle of the world is understood
 Only by him who feels that God is good,
 As only he can feel who makes his love
 The ladder of his faith, and climbs above
 On th' rounds of his best instincts; draws no line
 Between mere human goodness and divine, 31
 But, judging God by what in him is best,
 With a child's trust leans on a Father's breast.
 And hears unmoved the old creeds babble still
 Of kingly power and dread caprice of will,
 Chary of blessing, prodigal of curse,
 The pitiless doomsman of the universe.
 Can Hatred ask for love? Can Selfishness
 Invite to self-denial? Is He less
 Than man in kindly dealing? Can He break 40
 His own great law of fatherhood, forsake
 And curse His children? Not for earth and heaven
 Can separate tables of the law be given.
 No rule can bind which He himself denies;
 The truths of time are not eternal lies."

So heard I; and the chaos round me spread
 To light and order grew; and, "Lord," I said,
 "Our sins are our tormentors, worst of all
 Felt in distrustful shame that dares not call
 Upon Thee as our Father. We have set 50
 A strange god up, but Thou remainest yet.
 All that I feel of pity Thou hast known
 Before I was; my best is all Thy own.
 From Thy great heart of goodness mine but drew
 Wishes and prayers; but Thou, O Lord, wilt do,
 In Thy own time, by ways I cannot see.
 All that I feel when I am nearest Thee!"

THE FRIEND'S BURIAL

My thoughts are all in yonder town,
 Where, wept by many tears,
 To-day my mother's friend lays down
 The burden of her years.

True as in life, no poor disguise
 Of death with her is seen,
 And on her simple casket lies
 No wreath of bloom and green.

Oh, not for her the florist's art,
 The mocking weeds of woe; 10
 Dear memories in each mourner's heart
 Like heaven's white lilies blow.

And all about the softening air
 Of new-born sweetness tells,
 And the ungathered May-flowers wear
 The tints of ocean shells.

The old, assuring miracle
 Is fresh as heretofore;
 And earth takes up its parable
 Of life from death once more. 20

Here organ-swell and church-bell toll
 Methinks but discord were;
 The prayerful silence of the soul
 Is best befitting her.

No sound should break the quietude
 Alike of earth and sky;
 O wandering wind in Seabrook wood,
 Breathe but a half-heard sigh!

Sing softly, spring-bird, for her sake;
 And thou not distant sea, 30
 Lapse lightly as if Jesus spake,
 And thou wert Galilee!

For all her quiet life flowed on
 As meadow streamlets flow,
 Where fresher green reveals alone
 The noiseless ways they go.

From her loved place of prayer I see
 The plain-robed mourners pass,
 With slow feet treading reverently
 The graveyard's springing grass.

40

Make room, O mourning ones, for me,
 Where, like the friends of Paul,
 That you no more her face shall see
 You sorrow most of all.

Her path shall brighten more and more
 Unto the perfect day;
 She cannot fail of peace who bore
 Such peace with her away.

O sweet, calm face that seemed to wear
 The look of sins forgiven !
 O voice of prayer that seemed to bear
 Our own needs up to heaven !

50

How reverent in our midst she stood,
 Or knelt in grateful praise !
 What grace of Christian womanhood
 Was in her household ways !

For still her holy living meant
 No duty left undone ;
 The heavenly and the human blent
 Their kindred loves in one.

60

And if her life small leisure found
 For feasting ear and eye,
 And Pleasure, on her daily round,
 She passed unpausing by,

Yet with her went a secret sense
Of all things sweet and fair,
And Beauty's gracious providence
Refreshed her unaware.

She kept her line of rectitude
With love's unconscious ease; 70
Her kindly instincts understood
All gentle courtesies.

An inborn charm of graciousness
Made sweet her smile and tone,
And glorified her farm-wife dress
With beauty not its own.

The dear Lord's best interpreters
Are humble human souls;
The Gospel of a life like hers
Is more than books or scrolls. 80

From scheme and creed the light goes out,
The saintly fact survives;
The blessed Master none can doubt
Revealed in holy lives.

1873.

VESTA

O CHRIST of God ! whose life and death
Our own have reconciled,
Most quietly, most tenderly
Take home Thy star-named child !

Thy grace is in her patient eyes,
Thy words are on her tongue;
The very silence round her seems
As if the angels sung.

Her smile is as a listening child's
Who hears its mother call; 10
The lilies of Thy perfect peace
About her pillow fall.

She leans from out our clinging arms
 To rest herself in Thine;
 Alone to Thee, dear Lord, can we
 Our well-beloved resign !

Oh, less for her than for ourselves
 We bow our heads and pray;
 Her setting star, like Bethlehem's,
 To Thee shall point the way !

20

1874.

CHILD-SONGS

STILL linger in our noon of time
 And on our Saxon tongue
 The echoes of the home-born hymns
 The Aryan mothers sung.

And childhood had its litanies
 In every age and clime;
 The earliest cradles of the race
 Were rocked to poet's rhyme.

Nor sky, nor wave, nor tree, nor flower,
 Nor green earth's virgin sod,
 So moved the singer's heart of old
 As these small ones of God.

10

The mystery of unfolding life
 Was more than dawning morn,
 Than opening flower or crescent moon
 The human soul new-born !

And still to childhood's sweet appeal
 The heart of genius turns,
 And more than all the sages teach
 From lisping voices learns,—

20

The voices loved of him who sang,
 Where Tweed and Teviot glide,
 That sound to-day on all the winds
 That blow from Rydal-side,—

Heard in the Teuton's household songs,
And folk-lore of the Finn,
Where'er to holy Christmas hearths
The Christ-child enters in !

Before life's sweetest mystery still
The heart in reverence kneels; 30
The wonder of the primal birth
The latest mother feels.

We need love's tender lessons taught
As only weakness can;
God hath His small interpreters;
The child must teach the man.

We wander wide through evil years,
Our eyes of faith grow dim;
But he is freshest from His hands
And nearest unto Him ! 40

And haply, pleading long with Him
For sin-sick hearts and cold,
The angels of our childhood still
The Father's face behold.

Of such the kingdom !—Teach Thou us,
O Master most divine,
To feel the deep significance
Of these wise words of Thine !

The haughty eye shall seek in vain
What innocence beholds; 50
No cunning finds the key of heaven,
No strength its gate unfolds.

Alone to guilelessness and love
That gate shall open fall;
The mind of pride is nothingness,
The childlike heart is all !

THE VISION OF ECHARD

THE Benedictine Echard
 Sat by the wayside well,
 Where Marsberg sees the bridal
 Of the Sarre and the Moselle.

Fair with its sloping vineyards
 And tawny chestnut bloom,
 The happy vale Ausonius sung
 For holy Treves made room.

On the shrine Helena builded
 To keep the Christ coat well,
 On minster tower and kloster cross,
 The westering sunshine fell. 10

There, where the rock-hewn circles
 O'erlooked the Roman's game,
 The veil of sleep fell on him,
 And his thought a dream became.

He felt the heart of silence
 Throb with a soundless word,
 And by the inward ear alone
 A spirit's voice he heard. 20

And the spoken word seemed written
 On air and wave and sod,
 And the bending walls of sapphire
 Blazed with the thought of God :

"What lack I, O My children ?
 All things are in My hand ;
 The vast earth and the awful stars
 I hold as grains of sand.

"Need I your alms ? The silver
 And gold are Mine alone ;
 The gifts ye bring before Me
 Were evermore My own. 30

“ Heed I the noise of viols,
Your pomp of masque and show ?
Have I not dawns and sunsets ?
Have I not winds that blow ?

“ Do I smell your gums of incense ?
Is My ear with chantings fed ?
Taste I your wine of worship,
Or eat your holy bread ?

40

“ Of rank and name and honours
Am I vain as ye are vain ?
What can Eternal Fulness
From your lip-service gain ?

“ Ye make Me not your debtor
Who serve yourselves alone ;
Ye boast to Me of homage
Whose gain is all your own.

“ For you I gave the prophets,
For you the Psalmist's lay :
For you the law's stone tables,
And holy book and day.

50

“ Ye change to weary burdens
The helps that should uplift ;
Ye lose in form the spirit,
The Giver in the gift.

“ Who called ye to self-torment,
To fast and penance vain ?
Dream ye Eternal Goodness
Has joy in mortal pain ?

60

“ For the death in life of Nitria,
For your Chartreuse ever dumb,
What better is the neighbour,
Or happier the home ?

“ Who counts his brother’s welfare
As sacred as his own,
And loves, forgives, and pities,
He serveth Me alone.

“ I note each gracious purpose,
Each kindly word and deed;
Are ye not all My children ?
Shall not the Father heed ?

70

“ No prayer for light and guidance
Is lost upon Mine ear:
The child’s cry in the darkness
Shall not the Father hear ?

“ I loathe your wrangling councils,
I tread upon your creeds;
Who made ye Mine avengers,
Or told ye of My needs;

80

“ I bless men and ye curse them,
I love them and ye hate;
Ye bite and tear each other,
I suffer long and wait.

“ Ye bow to ghastly symbols,
To cross and scourge and thorn;
Ye seek His Syrian manger
Who in the heart is born.

“ For the dead Christ, not the living,
Ye watch His empty grave,
Whose life alone within you
Has power to bless and save.

90

“ O blind ones, outward groping,
The idle quest forgo;
Who listens to His inward voice
Alone of Him shall know.

“ His love all love exceeding
The heart must needs recall,
Its self-surrendering freedom,
Its loss that gaineth all. 100

“ Climb not the holy mountains,
Their eagles know not Me;
Seek not the Blessed Islands,
I dwell not in the sea.

“ Gone is the mount of Meru,
The triple gods are gone,
And, deaf to all the lama's prayers,
The Buddha slumbers on.

“ No more from rocky Horeb
The smitten waters gush; 110
Fallen is Bethel's ladder,
Quenched is the burning bush.

“ The jewels of the Urim
And Thummim all are dim;
The fire has left the altar,
The sign the teraphim.

“ No more in ark or hill grove
The Holiest abides;
Not in the scroll's dead letter,
The eternal secret hides. 120

“ The eye shall fail that searches
For Me the hollow sky;
The far is even as the near.
The low is as the high.

“ What if the earth is hiding
Her old faiths, long outworn?
What is it to the changeless truth
That yours shall fail in turn?

“What if the o’erturned altar
Lays bare the ancient lie ?
What if the dreams and legends
Of the world’s childhood die ?

130

“Have ye not still My witness
Within yourselves always,
My hand that on the keys of life
For bliss or bale I lay ?

“Still, in perpetual judgement,
I hold assize within,
With sure reward of holiness,
And dread rebuke of sin.

140

“A light, a guide, a warning,
A presence ever near,
Through the deep silence of the flesh
I reach the inward ear.

“My Gerizim and Ebal
Are in each human soul,
The still, small voice of blessing,
And Sinai’s thunder-roll.

“The stern behest of duty,
The doom-book open thrown.
The heaven ye seek, the hell ye fear,
Are with yourselves alone.”

150

A gold and purple sunset
Flowed down the broad Moselle;
On hills of vine and meadow lands
The peace of twilight fell.

A slow, cool wind of evening
Blew over leaf and bloom;
And, faint and far, the Angelus
Rang from Saint Matthew’s tomb.

160

Then up rose Master Echard,
And marvelled: "Can it be
That here, in dream and vision,
The Lord hath talked with me?"

He went his way; behind him
The shrines of saintly dead,
The holy coat and nail of cross,
He left unvisited.

He sought the vale of Eltzbach
His burdened soul to free,
Where the foot-hills of the Eifel
Are glassed in Laachersee.

170

And, in his Order's kloster,
He sat, in night-long parle,
With Tauler of the Friends of God,
And Nicolas of Basle.

And lo! the twain made answer:
"Yea, brother, even thus
The Voice above all voices
Hath spoken unto us.

180

"The world will have its idols,
And flesh and sense their sign:
But the blinded eyes shall open,
And the gross ear be fine.

"What if the vision tarry?
God's time is always best;
The true Light shall be witnessed,
The Christ within confessed.

"In mercy or in judgement
He shall turn and overturn,
Till the heart shall be His temple
Where all of Him shall learn."

190

THE WORD

VOICE of the Holy Spirit, making known
 Man to himself, a witness swift and sure,
 Warning, approving, true and wise and pure,
 Counsel and guidance that misleadeth none !
 By thee the mystery of life is read ;
 The picture-writing of the world's grey seers.
 The myths and parables of the primal years,
 Whose letter kills, by thee interpreted
 Take healthful meanings fitted to our needs,
 And in the soul's vernacular express 10
 The common law of simple righteousness.
 Hatred of cant and doubt of human creeds
 May well be felt: the unpardonable sin
 Is to deny the Word of God within !

1881.

THE BOOK

GALLERY of sacred pictures manifold,
 A minster rich in holy effigies,
 And bearing on entablature and frieze
 The hieroglyphic oracles of old.
 Along its transept aureoled martyrs sit ;
 And the low chancel side-lights half acquaint
 The eye with shrines of prophet, bard, and saint.
 Their age-dimmed tablets traced in doubtful writ !
 But only when on form and word obscure
 Falls from above the white supernal light 10
 We read the mystic characters aright,
 And life informs the silent portraiture,
 Until we pause at last, awe-held, before
 The One ineffable Face, love, wonder, and adore.

1881.

UTTERANCE

BUT what avail inadequate words to reach
 The innermost of Truth ? Who shall essay,
 Blinded and weak, to point and lead the way,
 Or solve the mystery in familiar speech ?
 Yet, if it be that something not thy own,
 Some shadow of the Thought to which our schemes,
 Creeds, cult, and ritual are at best but dreams,
 Is even to thy unworthiness made known,
 Thou mayst not hide what yet thou shouldst not dare
 To utter lightly, lest on lips of thine 10
 The real seem false, the beauty undivine.
 So, weighing duty in the scale of prayer,
 Give what seems given thee. It may prove a seed
 Of goodness dropped in fallow-grounds of need.

1881.

THE MYSTIC'S CHRISTMAS

" ALL hail ! " the bells of Christmas rang,
 " All hail ! " the monks at Christmas sang,
 The merry monks who kept with cheer
 The gladdest day of all their year.

But still apart, unmoved thereat,
 A pious elder brother sat
 Silent, in his accustomed place,
 With God's sweet peace upon his face.

" Why sitt'st thou thus ? " his brethren cried.
 " It is the blessed Christmas-tide ; 10
 The Christmas lights are all aglow,
 The sacred lilies bud and blow.

" Above our heads the joy-bells ring,
 Without the happy children sing,
 And all God's creatures hail the morn
 On which the holy Christ was born !

" Rejoice with us ; no more rebuke
 Our gladness with thy quiet look."
 The grey monk answered : " Keep, I pray,
 Even as ye list, the Lord's birthday.

20

" Let heathen Yule fires flicker red
 Where thronged refectory feasts are spread ;
 With mystery-play and masque and mime
 And wait-songs speed the holy time !

" The blindest faith may haply save ;
 The Lord accepts the things we have ;
 And reverence, howsoe'er it strays,
 May find at last the shining ways.

" They needs must grope who cannot see.
 The blade before the ear must be ;
 As ye are feeling I have felt,
 And where ye dwell I too have dwelt.

30

" But now, beyond the things of sense,
 Beyond occasions and events,
 I know, through God's exceeding grace,
 Release from form and time and place.

" I listen, from no mortal tongue,
 To hear the song the angels sung ;
 And wait within myself to know
 The Christmas lilies bud and blow.

40

" The outward symbols disappear
 From him whose inward sight is clear ;
 And small must be the choice of days
 To him who fills them all with praise !

" Keep while you need it, brothers mine,
 With honest zeal your Christmas sign,
 But judge not him who every morn
 Feels in his heart the Lord Christ born !"

AT LAST

WHEN on my day of life the night is falling,
 And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
 I hear far voices out of darkness calling
 My feet to paths unknown,

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
 Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
 O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
 Be Thou my strength and stay !

Be near me when all else is from me drifting;
 Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
 And kindly faces to my own uplifting 11
 The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, my Father ! let Thy spirit
 Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
 No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
 Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
 And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—
 I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
 Unto my fitting place. 20

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
 Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
 And flows forever through heaven's green expansions
 The river of Thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
 I fain would learn the new and holy song,
 And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
 The life for which I long.

WHAT THE TRAVELLER SAID AT SUNSET

THE shadows grow and deepen round me,
 I feel the dew-fall in the air;
 The muezzin of the darkening thicket,
 I hear the night-thrush call to prayer.

The evening wind is sad with farewells,
 And loving hands unclasp from mine;
 Alone I go to meet the darkness
 Across an awful boundary-line.

As from the lighted hearths behind me
 I pass with slow, reluctant feet, 10
 What waits me in the land of strangeness?
 What face shall smile, what voice shall greet?

What space shall awe, what brightness blind me?
 What thunder-roll of music stun?
 What vast processions sweep before me
 Of shapes unknown beneath the sun?

I shrink from unaccustomed glory.
 I dread the myriad-voic'd strain:
 Give me the unforgotten faces,
 And let my lost ones speak again. 20

He will not chide my mortal yearning
 Who is our Brother and our Friend;
 In whose full life, divine and human,
 The heavenly and the earthly blend.

Mine be the joy of soul-communion,
 The sense of spiritual strength renewed,
 The reverence for the pure and holy,
 The dear delight of doing good.

No fitting ear is mine to listen
 An endless anthem's rise and fall; 30
 No curious eye is mine to measure
 The pearl gate and the jasper wall.

For love must needs be more than knowledge :
 . What matter if I never know
 Why Aldebaran's star is ruddy,
 Or warmer Sirius white as snow !

Forgive my human words, O Father !
 I go Thy larger truth to prove ;
 Thy mercy shall transcend my longing :
 I seek but love, and Thou art Love !

40

I go to find my lost and mourned for
 Safe in Thy sheltering goodness still,
 And all that hope and faith foreshadow
 Made perfect in Thy holy will !

1883.

"THE STORY OF IDA "

Francesca Alexander, whose pen and pencil have so reverently transcribed the simple faith and life of the Italian peasantry, wrote the narrative published with John Ruskin's introduction under the title, *The Story of Ida*.

WEARY of jangling noises never stilled,
 The sceptic's sneer, the bigot's hate, the din
 Of clashing texts, the webs of creed men spin
 Round simple truth, the children grown who build
 With gilded cards their new Jerusalem,
 Busy, with sacerdotal tailorings
 And tinsel gauds, bedizening holy things,
 I turn, with glad and grateful heart, from them
 To the sweet story of the Florentine
 Immortal in her blameless maidenhood, 10
 Beautiful as God's angels and as good ;
 Feeling that life, even now, may be divine
 With love no wrong can ever change to hate.
 No sin make less than all-compassionate !

1884.

THE LIGHT THAT IS FELT

A TENDER child of summers three,
 Seeking her little bed at night,
 Paused on the dark stair timidly.
 "Oh, mother! Take my hand," said she,
 "And then the dark will all be light."

We older children grope our way
 From dark behind to dark before;
 And only when our hands we lay,
 Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,
 And there is darkness nevermore.

10

Reach downward to the sunless days
 Wherein our guides are blind as we,
 And faith is small and hope delays;
 Take Thou the hands of prayer we raise,
 And let us feel the light of Thee!

1884.

THE TWO LOVES

SMOOTHING soft the nestling head
 Of a maiden fancy-led,
 Thus a grave-eyed woman said:

"Richest gifts are those we make,
 Dearer than the love we take
 That we give for love's own sake.

"Well I know the heart's unrest;
 Mine has been the common quest,
 To be loved and therefore blest.

"Favours undeserved were mine;
 At my feet as on a shrine
 Love has laid its gifts divine.

10

" Sweet the offerings seemed, and yet
With their sweetness came regret,
And a sense of unpaid debt.

" Heart of mine unsatisfied,
Was it vanity or pride
That a deeper joy denied ?

" Hands that ope but to receive
Empty close; they only live
Richly who can richly give. 20

" Still," she sighed, with moistening eyes,
" Love is sweet in any guise;
But its best is sacrifice !

" He who, giving, does not crave
Likest is to Him who gave
Life itself the loved to save.

" Love, that self-forgetful gives,
Sows surprise of ripened sheaves,
Late or soon its own receives." 30

1884.

ADJUSTMENT

THE tree of Faith its bare, dry boughs must shed
That nearer heaven the living ones may climb;
The false must fail, though from our shores of
time

The old lament be heard, " Great Pan is dead !"
That wail is Error's, from his high place hurled;
This sharp recoil is Evil undertrod;
Our time's unrest, an angel sent of God
Troubling with life the waters of the world.
Even as they list the winds of the Spirit blow
To turn or break our century-rusted vanes: 10
Sands shift and waste; the rock alone remains
Where, led of Heaven, the strong tides come and go,

And storm-clouds, rent by thunderbolt and wind,
Leave, free of mist, the permanent stars behind.

Therefore I trust, although to outward sense
Both true and false seem shaken; I will hold
With newer light my reverence for the old,
And calmly wait the births of Providence.
No gain is lost; the clear-eyed saints look down
Untroubled on the wreck of schemes and creeds;
Love yet remains, its rosary of good deeds 21
Counting in task-field and o'erpeopled town.
Truth has charmed life; the Inward Word survives,
And, day by day, its revelation brings:
Faith, hope, and charity, whatsoever things
Which cannot be shaken, stand. Still holy lives
Reveal the Christ of whom the letter told,
And the new gospel verifies the old.

1885.

REVELATION

"And I went into the Vale of Beavor, and as I went I preached repentance to the people. And one morning sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me, and a temptation beset me. And it was said: *All things come by Nature*; and the Elements and the Stars came over me. And as I sat still and let it alone a living hope arose in me, and a true Voice, which said: *There is a living God who made all things*. And immediately the cloud and the temptation vanished, and Life rose over all, and my heart was glad and I praised the living God."—*Journal of George Fox*, 1690.

STILL, as of old, in Beavor's Vale,
O man of God! our hope and faith
The Elements and Stars assail,
And the awed spirit holds its breath,
Blown over by a wind of death.

Takes Nature thought for such as we,
What place her human atom fills,
The weed-drift of her careless sea,
The mist on her unheeding hills?
What recks she of our helpless wills? 10

Strange god of Force, with fear, not love,
Its trembling worshipper ! Can prayer
Reach the shut ear of Fate, or move
Unpitying Energy to spare ?
What doth the cosmic Vastness care ?

In vain to this dread Unconcern
For the All-Father's love we look ;
In vain, in quest of it, we turn
The storied leaves of Nature's book,
The prints her rocky tablets took. 20

I pray for faith, I long to trust ;
I listen with my heart, and hear
A Voice without a sound : " Be just,
Be true, be merciful, revere
The Word within thee : God is near !

" A light to sky and earth unknown
Pales all their lights : a mightier force
Than theirs the powers of Nature own,
And, to its goal as at its source,
His Spirit moves the Universe. 30

" Believe and trust. Through stars and suns,
Through life and death, through soul and sense,
His wise, paternal purpose runs ;
The darkness of His providence
Is star-lit with benign intents."

O joy supreme ! I know the Voice,
Like none beside on earth or sea ;
Yea, more, O soul of mine, rejoice,
By all that He requires of me,
I know what God Himself must be. 40

No picture to my aid I call.
I shape no image in my prayer ;
I only know in Him is all
Of life, light, beauty, everywhere,
Eternal Goodness here and there !

I know He is, and what He is,
Whose one great purpose is the good
Of all. I rest my soul on His
Immortal Love and Fatherhood;
And trust Him, as His children should. 50

I fear no more. The clouded face
Of Nature smiles; through all her things
Of time and space and sense I trace
The moving of the Spirit's wings,
And hear the song of hope she sings.

1886

AT SUNDOWN

THE CHRISTMAS OF 1888

Low in the east, against a white, cold dawn,
The black-lined silhouette of the woods was drawn,
And on a wintry waste
Of frosted streams and hillsides bare and brown,
Through thin cloud-films a pallid ghost looked down,
The waning moon half-faced !

In that pale sky and sere, snow-waiting earth,
What sign was there of the immortal birth ?

What herald of the One ?

Lo ! swift as thought the heavenly radiance came,
A rose-red splendour swept the sky like flame, 11
Up rolled the round, bright sun !

And all was changed. From a transfigured world
The moon's ghost fled, the smoke of home-hearths
curled

Up the still air unblown.

In Orient warmth and brightness, did that morn
O'er Nain and Nazareth, when the Christ was born,
Break fairer than our own ?

The morning's promise noon and eve fulfilled
In warm, soft sky and landscape hazy-hilled 20
And sunset fair as they ;

A sweet reminder of His holiest time,
A summer-miracle in our winter clime,
God gave a perfect day.

The near was blended with the old and far,
 And Bethlehem's hillside and the Magi's star
 Seemed here, as there and then,—
 Our homestead pine-tree was the Syrian palm,
 Our heart's desire the angels' midnight psalm,
 Peace, and good-will to men !

30

1888.

BURNING DRIFT-WOOD

BEFORE my drift-wood fire I sit,
 And see, with every waif I burn,
 Old dreams and fancies colouring it,
 And folly's unlaïd ghosts return.

O ships of mine, whose swift keels cleft
 The enchanted sea on which they sailed,
 Are these poor fragments only left
 Of vain desires and hopes that failed ?

Did I not watch from them the light
 Of sunset on my towers in Spain,
 And see, far off, uploom in sight
 The Fortunate Isles I might not gain ?

10

Did sudden lift of fog reveal
 Arcadia's vales of song and spring,
 And did I pass, with grazing keel,
 The rocks whereon the sirens sing ?

Have I not drifted hard upon
 The unmapped regions lost to man,
 The cloud-pitched tents of Prester John,
 The palace domes of Kubla Khan ?

20

Did land winds blow from jasmine flowers,
 Where Youth the ageless Fountain fills ?
 Did Love make sign from rose blown bowers,
 And gold from Eldorado's hills ?

Alas ! the gallant ships, that sailed
On blind Adventure's errant sent,
Howe'er they laid their courses, failed
To reach the haven of Content.

And of my ventures, those alone
Which Love had freighted, safely sped,
Seeking a good beyond my own, 31
By clear-eyed Duty piloted.

O mariners, hoping still to meet
The luck Arabian voyagers met,
And find in Bagdad's moonlit street,
Haroun al Raschid walking yet,

Take with you, on your Sea of Dreams,
The fair, fond fancies dear to youth.
I turn from all that only seems,
And seek the sober grounds of truth. 40

What matter that it is not May,
That birds have flown, and trees are bare,
That darker grows the shortening day.
And colder blows the wintry air !

The wrecks of passion and desire,
The castles I no more rebuild,
May fitly feed my drift-wood fire,
And warm the hands that age has chilled.

Whatever perished with my ships,
I only know the best remains ; 50
A song of praise is on my lips
For losses which are now my gains.

Heap high my hearth ! No worth is lost ;
No wisdom with the folly dies.
Burn on, poor shreds, your holocaust
Shall be my evening sacrifice !

Far more than all I dared to dream,
Unsought before my door I see;
On wings of fire and steeds of steam
The world's great wonders come to me,

60

And holier signs, unmarked before,
Of Love to seek and Power to save.—
The righting of the wronged and poor,
The man evolving from the slave;

And life, no longer chance or fate,
Safe in the gracious Fatherhood.
I fold o'er-wearied hands and wait.
In full assurance of the good.

And well the waiting time must be,
Though brief or long its granted days,
If Faith and Hope and Charity
Sit by my evening hearth-fire's blaze.

70

And with them, friends whom Heaven has spared,
Whose love my heart has comforted,
And, sharing all my joys, has shared
My tender memories of the dead,—

Dear souls who left us lonely here,
Bound on their last, long voyage, to whom
We, day by day, are drawing near,
Where every bark has sailing room.

80

I know the solemn monotone
Of waters calling unto me;
I know from whence the airs have blown
That whisper of the Eternal Sea.

As low my fires of drift-wood burn,
I hear that sea's deep sounds increase,
And, fair in sunset light, discern
Its mirage-lifted Isles of Peace.

LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY

Inscription on her Memorial Tablet in Christ Church at Hartford,
Conn.

SHE sang alone, ere womanhood had known
The gift of song which fills the air to-day:
Tender and sweet, a music all her own
May fitly linger where she knelt to pray.

1888.

MILTON

Inscription on the Memorial Window in St. Margaret's Church.
Westminster, the gift of George W. Childs, of America.

THE new world honours him whose lofty plea
For England's freedom made her own more sure,
Whose song, immortal as its theme, shall be
Their common freehold while both worlds endure.

1890.

THE WIND OF MARCH

UP from the sea the wild north wind is blowing
Under the sky's grey arch;
Smiling, I watch the shaken elm-boughs, knowing
It is the wind of March.

Between the passing and the coming season,
This stormy interlude
Gives to our winter-wearied hearts a reason
For trustful gratitude.

Welcome to waiting ears its harsh forewarning
Of light and warmth to come,
The longed-for joy of Nature's Easter morning,
The earth arisen in bloom !

10

In the loud tumult winter's strength is breaking;
I listen to the sound,
As to a voice of resurrection, waking
To life the dead, cold ground.

Between these gusts, to the soft lapse I hearken
Of rivulets on their way;
I see these tossed and naked tree-tops darken
With the fresh leaves of May.

20

This roar of storm, this sky so grey and lowering
Invite the airs of Spring,
A warmer sunshine over fields of flowering,
The bluebird's song and wing.

Closely behind, the Gulf's warm breezes follow
This northern hurricane,
And, borne thereon, the bobolink and swallow
Shall visit us again.

And, in green wood-paths, in the kine-fed pasture
And by the whispering rills,
Shall flowers repeat the lesson of the Master,
Taught on His Syrian hills.

30

Blow, then, wild wind! thy roar shall end in singing,
Thy chill in blossoming;
Come, like Bethesda's troubling angel, bringing
The healing of the Spring.

1892.

THE LAST EVE OF SUMMER

SUMMER's last sun nigh unto setting shines
Through yon columnar pines,
And on the deepening shadows of the lawn
Its golden lines are drawn.

Dreaming of long gone summer days like this,
Feeling the wind's soft kiss,
Grateful and glad that failing ear and sight
Have still their old delight,

I sit alone, and watch the warm, sweet day
Lapse tenderly away ; 10
And, wistful, with a feeling of forecast,
I ask, " Is this the last ?

" Will nevermore for me the seasons run
Their round, and will the sun
Of ardent summers yet to come forget
For me to rise and set ?"

Thou shouldst be here, or I should be with thee
Wherever thou mayst be,
Lips mute, hands clasped, in silences of speech
Each answering unto each. 20

For this still hour, this sense of mystery far
Beyond the evening star,
No words outworn suffice on lip or scroll :
The soul would fain with soul

Wait, while these few swift-passing days fulfil
The wise-disposing Will,
And, in the evening as at morning, trust
The All-Merciful and Just.

The solemn joy that soul-communion feels
Immortal life reveals ; 30
And human love, its prophecy and sign,
Interprets love divine.

Come then, in thought, if that alone may be,
O friend ! and bring with thee
Thy calm assurance of transcendent Spheres
And the Eternal Years !

TO OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

[This, the last of Mr. Whittier's poems, was written but a few weeks before his death.]

AMONG the thousands who with hail and cheer
Will welcome thy new year,
How few of all have passed, as thou and I,
So many milestones by !

We have grown old together ; we have seen,
Our youth and age between,
Two generations leave us, and to-day
We with the third hold way,

Loving and loved. If thought must backward run
To those who, one by one, 10
In the great silence and the dark beyond
Vanished with farewells fond.

Unseen, not lost ; our grateful memories still
Their vacant places fill,
And with the full-voiced greeting of new friends
A tenderer whisper blends.

Linked close in a pathetic brotherhood
Of mingled ill and good,
Of joy and grief, of grandeur and of shame,
For pity more than blame,— 20

The gift is thine the weary world to make
More cheerful for thy sake,
Soothing the ears its Miserere pains,
With the old Hellenic strains,

Lighting the sullen face of discontent
With smiles for blessing sent.
Enough of selfish wailing has been had,
Thank God ! for notes more glad.

Life is indeed no holiday; therein
Are want, and woe, and sin, 30
Death and its nameless fears, and over all
Our pitying tears must fall.

Sorrow is real; but the counterfeit
Which folly brings to it,
We need thy wit and wisdom to resist,
O rarest Optimist !

Thy hand, old friend ! the service of our days,
In differing moods and ways
May prove to those who follow in our train
Not valueless nor vain. 40

Far off, and faint as echoes of a dream,
The songs of boyhood seem,
Yet on our autumn boughs, unflown with spring,
The evening thrushes sing.

The hour draws near, howe'er delayed and late,
When at the Eternal Gate
We leave the words and works we call our own,
And lift void hands alone

For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul
Brings to that Gate no toll; 50
Giftless we come to Him, who all things gives,
And live because He lives.

EARLY VERSES

THE FAIR QUAKERESS

SHE was a fair young girl, yet on her brow
No pale pearl shone, a blemish on the pure
And snowy lustre of its living light,
No radiant gem shone beautifully through
The shadowing of her tresses, as a star
Through the dark sky of midnight; and no wreath
Of coral circled on her queenly neck,
In mockery of the glowing cheek and lip.
Whose hue the fairy guardian of the flowers
Might never rival when her delicate touch 10
Tinges the rose of springtime.

Unadorned,
Save by her youthful charms, and with a garb
Simple as Nature's self, why turn to her
The proud and gifted, and the versed in all
The pageantry of fashion ?

She hath not
Moved down the dance to music, when the hall
Is lighted up like sunshine, and the thrill
Of the light viol and the mellow flute,
And the deep tones of manhood, softened down
To very music melt upon the ear.— 20
She has not mingled with the hollow world
Nor tampered with its mockeries, until all
The delicate perceptions of the heart,
The innate modesty, the watchful sense

Of maiden dignity, are lost within
The maze of fashion and the din of crowds.

Yet Beauty hath its homage. Kings have bowed
From the tall majesty of ancient thrones
With a prostrated knee, yea, cast aside
The awfulness of time-created power 30
For the regardful glances of a child.
Yea, the high ones and powerful of Earth,
The helmèd sons of victory, the grave
And schooled philosophers, the giant men
Of overmastering intellect, have turned
Each from the separate idol of his high
And vehement ambition for the low
Idolatry of human loveliness;
And bartered the sublimity of mind,
The godlike and commanding intellect 40
Which nations knelt to, for a woman's tear,
A soft-toned answer, or a wanton's smile.

And in the chastened beauty of that eye,
And in the beautiful play of that red lip,
And in the quiet smile, and in the voice
Sweet as the tuneful greeting of a bird
To the first flowers of springtime, there is more
Than the perfection of the painter's skill
Or statuary's moulding. *Mind* is there,
The pure and holy attributes of soul, 50
The seal of virtue, the exceeding grace
Of meekness blended with a maiden pride;
Nor deem ye that beneath the gentle smile,
And the calm temper of a chastened mind
No warmth of passion kindles, and no tide
Of quick and earnest feeling courses on
From the warm heart's pulsations. There are springs
Of deep and pure affection, hidden now,
Within that quiet bosom, which but wait
The thrilling of some kindly touch, to flow 60
Like waters from the Desert-rock of old.

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM

[The album belonged to the grandson of Whittier's life-long friend, Theodore D. Weld, and the lines were written in April, 1884.]

WHAT shall I wish him ? Strength and health
 May be abused, and so may wealth.
 Even fame itself may come to be
 But wearying notoriety.

What better can I ask than this ?—
 A life of brave unselfishness,
 Wisdom for council, eloquence
 For Freedom's need, for Truth's defence,
 The championship of all that's good,
 The manliest faith in womanhood,

10

The steadfast friendship changing not
 With change of time or place or lot,
 Hatred of sin, but not the less
 A heart of pitying tenderness
 And charity, that, suffering long,
 Shames the wrong-doer from his wrong:
 One wish expresses all—that he
 May even as his grandsire be !

18

NOTE ON "THE SLAVE-SHIPS."

"The French ship *Le Rodeur*, with a crew of twenty-two men, and with one hundred and sixty negro slaves, sailed from Bonny, in Africa, April, 1819. On approaching the line, a terrible malady broke out,—an obstinate disease of the eyes,—contagious, and altogether beyond the resources of medicine. It was aggravated by the scarcity of water among the slaves (only half a wineglass per day being allowed to an individual), and by the extreme impurity of the air in which they breathed. By the advice of the physician, they were brought upon deck occasionally; but some of the poor wretches, locking themselves in each other's arms, leaped overboard, in the hope, which so universally prevails among them, of being swiftly transported to their own homes in Africa. To check this, the captain ordered several, who were stopped in the attempt, to be shot, or hanged, before their companions. The disease extended to the crew; and one after another were smitten with it, until only *one* remained unaffected. Yet even this dreadful condition did not preclude calculation: to save the expense of supporting slaves rendered unsaleable, and to obtain grounds for a claim against the underwriters, *thirty-six of the negroes, having become blind, were thrown into the sea and drowned!*"—*Speech of M. Benjamin Constant, in the French Chamber of Deputies, June 17, 1820.*

In the midst of their dreadful fears lest the solitary individual whose sight remained unaffected should also be seized with the malady, a sail was discovered. It was the Spanish slaver, *Leon*. The same disease had been there; and, horrible to tell, all the crew had become blind! Unable to assist each other, the vessels parted. The Spanish ship has never since been heard of. The *Rodeur* reached Guadaloupe on the 21st of June; the only man who had escaped the disease, and had thus been enabled to steer the slaver into port, caught it in three days after its arrival.—*Bibliothèque Ophthalmologique* for November, 1819.

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